

# Scald burns



Hôpital de Montréal  
pour enfants  
Centre universitaire  
de santé McGill



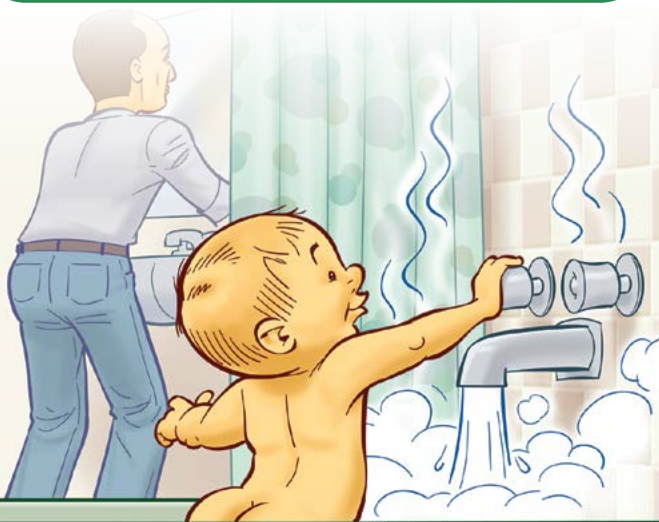
Montreal Children's  
Hospital  
McGill University  
Health Centre

**TRAUMATOLOGIE TRAUMA**

# Scald burns are burns caused by hot liquids and steam

- **67%** of children with scald burns need medical follow-up after leaving the emergency department. **13%** of children with scald burns are admitted to hospital.  
*(REF: Public Health Agency of Canada)*
- **75%** of all cases of scald burns involve children under 4 years of age.
- **Hot tap water** accounts for 25% of scald burns among children 4 years of age and under.
- Hot liquids can burn a child's skin **4 times more quickly** and deeply than an adult's.  
*(REF: SafeKids Canada)*
- A child can develop a severe burn in only **1 second** when water temperature is 68 °C (155 °F).
- Severe burns can lead to disfigurement and other **long-term** consequences.

**Don't let your child become a statistic!**



# Preventing scald burns



- Turn pot/pan handles inward when cooking.
- Keep small children away from open oven doors and stove tops. Keep the stove area a “kid-free zone” (one meter distance).
- Use safety devices such as stove guards and oven locks.
- **NEVER** hold your child in your arms when cooking at the stove, barbecue or campfire.
- Always test the temperature of the food and liquid before feeding your child. **NEVER** heat baby bottles in the microwave.



- Keep hot liquids out of reach of children.
- Use non-slip placemats instead of tablecloths so that your child cannot pull hot food onto him/herself.
- Place hot food in the centre of the table, at least 25 cm from the edge.
- **DO NOT** place hot liquids on low tables.



- Put down your hot drink before picking up your child.
- Hot drinks should not be placed in cup holders on baby carriages.
- Make sure electrical cords do not dangle from countertops.



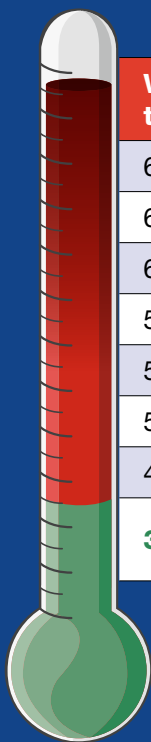
- Set the temperature on your hot water heater to 60°C, and to prevent burns, have a plumber install mixing valves to lower the temperature of water at the faucet to 49°C.  
(ref. Hydro-Québec, 2015, Health Canada, 2015)
- Check the water temperature before putting your child in a bathtub. The safest temperature for bathing is below 37 °C (100 °F). Turn the cold water faucet off last.
- Seat your child with his/her back to the faucet.
- **NEVER** leave children unattended in the bath or near water.

## Scald burns are 100% preventable!

- Children are curious, have less perception of danger and lack the ability to escape a situation that can result in a burn.
- Constant adult supervision is the single most important factor in preventing scald burns.

# It only takes one second...

## Time required for a severe burn to occur



| Water temperature     | Time before burning                 |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 68 °C (155 °F)        | 1 second                            |
| 64 °C (148 °F)        | 2 seconds                           |
| 60 °C (140 °F)        | 5 seconds                           |
| 56 °C (133 °F)        | 15 seconds                          |
| 52 °C (127 °F)        | 1 minute                            |
| 51 °C (124 °F)        | 3 minutes                           |
| 48 °C (120 °F)        | 5 minutes                           |
| <b>37 °C (100 °F)</b> | <b>Safe temperature for bathing</b> |

### TRAUMA CENTRE

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