#Bewareofburns

This video [http://bit.ly/2qjG6RN](http://bit.ly/2qjG6RN) was filmed in 2012 and involved University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust issuing safety messages about the danger that hair straighteners can pose around the home – if not kept from the reach of children. Sadly statistics revealed by the Bristol Royal Hospital for children to us shows a staggering 90% of children admitted with burns from hair straighteners were under the age of five. The data also found there was no difference between the number of boys and girls burnt. This is one of the reasons we are highlighting this risk. At the same time as running the #Bewareofburns campaign, this and every campaign we run in the future will be accompanied with the #sharingiscaring message. A simple share of our posts on social media could prevent a child from suffering life changing injuries.

**Fact**

Babies and young children have such delicate skin that they can be burned far more easily than adults. A young child’s skin is 15 times thinner than an adult’s and they will feel the heat much quicker. This could be from the sun, hot water, hot drinks or hot appliances. They are more likely to get a severe burn or scald at a much lower temperature than adults, and the burn or scald will cover more of their body as they are so small. Hot drinks cause the most scalds to young children. Hair straighteners are a growing concern as hospitals are seeing more young children burned from these items.

**Did You Know?**

- Mugs of tea and coffee can pose a major burn threat to babies and young children. Wherever you enjoy a hot drink, make sure it is kept well out of reach from young children – particularly babies. Any hot drink can still scald a baby 15 minutes after it’s been made.
- Hair straighteners can heat as hot as an iron - 230°C and they take a while to cool down, so it is important to keep them out of reach of young children.

Look below for our advice on what you can do to make these appliances safer around your home.

**Safety Reminders – How You Can Prevent Burns and Scalds**

**In the living room**

A crawler or toddler may take over this area – with exciting things to grab, places to explore, and things to climb on and jump from. Newly crawling babies will surprise at the speed they can move around the room and gain access to places which they were unable to reach before.

- **Hot drinks** – Put your steaming mug of tea or coffee out of reach of babies and young children. Nursing mothers and adults holding a baby or young child on their lap should avoid drinking hot drinks at the same time. A scald to a young child’s head will cause devastating injuries.
• **Heaters and fires** – an obvious burn and scald hazard for youngsters around the home. But there are ways you can make the area safer.

Ensure fire guards are always in place and fixed to the wall for all types of fire. Wood burning stoves, in particular, become very hot when used and your child needs to be protected. The same goes for open fires, gas fires and electric/halogen radiators.

• **Matches, cigarette lighters and candles** – are objects for adults only and not for children. They will find them fascinating and may want to copy you, but it’s best to keep these items away from young children and out of reach and sight. If you can lock them away, even better. Remember that even though lighters are child-resistant, many 3 and 4-year-olds will be able to operate them in a few seconds.

### In the kitchen

This area has the most potential hazards for a young child associated with burns and scalds. From cookers and hobs to kettles and washing up areas – heat sources in and around the kitchen are everywhere! But with our guidance, child injury can be reduced. The best way to keep your child safe when you are preparing hot food is to keep them out of the kitchen by using a child safety gate across the kitchen entrance or strap your child into a high chair.

• **Cookers** – Ovens and grills can be located at low level – the perfect height for little ones to rest against, or touch. When opening an oven that has been turned on, always ensure any little ones are out of the way.

• **Hobs and hotplates** – Can stay hot even after they’ve been turned off, so ensure your young child is kept well away. You can start to tell a toddler about hot things around them, but don’t expect them to remember. You will need to remind them every time.

• **Saucepans and chip pans** – always turn the handles of saucepans away from you and towards the back on your worktop, or use the back rings when possible, to keep out of reach from little hands. Caution is required when placing food items in either a saucepan, or chip pan, as hot splashes are a risk too.

• **Hot drinks** – Ensure hot drinks that may have recently been made are placed well out of reach of your child and consume them away from them as well. The Kettle, can be a temptation to grab or pull on the cord, always make sure it is placed toward the rear of the worktop and buy one with a curly flex power cord.

• **Microwaves** – Don’t heat things in the same way as a conventional heat source. Babies bottles can heat up unevenly, and continue to heat when the microwave is off, leaving spots of very hot milk which can scald your baby’s mouth. It’s best to use a warmer or jug of hot water instead. Shake the bottle well after warming and test on the back of your hand to make sure it’s lukewarm and not hot.

• **Irons** - Heat to around 220°C. They are an important household item, but can be the cause of severe burns. Always store away from sight after use, out of reach, with cords tucked away. Irons can retain their heat for up to 15 minutes after switching off and even older children can burn themselves if they touch the iron. Often young children like to copy their parents and this is when they may try and touch the iron, to have a go.

• **Washing machine liqui-tabs** - As stated in the (link) poisoning section of this site, liquid-tabs are a hazard if ingested. As well as posing a poisoning risk, they are also caustic and can cause internal chemical burns.

### In the bedroom

Burn and scald risks are possible in the bedroom. You may have candles, matches, hair straighteners or hot drinks around when you are getting ready.
• **Hair straighteners, curling tongs, and hairdryers** – As highlighted at the start of this section, hair straighteners or curling tongs can heat to a similar temperature as an iron. Hair straighteners can still burn a child 30 minutes after being switched off. Always ensure they are left to cool out of reach of young children. We would advise that you use a heat proof cover and put away straight after use and out of reach and sight. Heat proof silicone-based hair straightener pouches can be purchased to store these devices and reduce the risk of burning anyone that may touch them – especially young children.

**In the bathroom**

Bath time is usually a fun time for a young child however, hot water can pose a real danger to young children. With these following steps, the risk of a scald can be reduced.

• **Cold before hot** – You can make sure bath time is a safe time by running the cold tap first, then add the hot slowly until it is at the correct temperature for your child.

• **The elbow test** – This is the quickest way to check the temperature is right for your child. Dipping your elbow into the water will provide a good indicator of how it will feel for your baby or toddler. It shouldn’t feel hot or cold.

• **Thermostatic mixing valves (TMVs)** – These devices centrally control the temperature of the hot tap, so that you can have a nice hot bath, and can prevent children being scalded from very hot water. Some newer houses and flats have TMVs already installed on the taps. If you don’t have them, you can get them installed by a professional.

• **Bath time!** – Staying with your child all the time when getting ready and when they are in the bath means you can keep your child as safe as possible and also make bath time fun. Many scalds happen when a child gets into the bath before it’s ready, or they turn on the hot tap when they’re in the bath or lean over to pick up a floating toy and fall in the bath. Bath water can cause serious burns and some children may need years of treatment and will be scarred for life.

**Outside your home**

Barbecues and bonfires are an obvious burns risk to young children. Adult supervision is important to ensure your child enjoys themselves around the bonfire or at a barbecue.

• **Barbecues** – The coals stay hot for a long time, even when all the food has gone. Disposable barbecues can be tipped into a bucket of cold water to help them cool quicker – while children are kept out of the way!

• **Bonfires** – Like an indoor fire, bonfires can be fascinating for children. Even though they usually only happen once a year it’s best to keep young children a safe distance from the fire and supervise them carefully.

• **Fireworks** – These are always a worry for parents, especially in autumn when many people have bonfire parties and firework nights. Children under 5 are too young to hold a sparkler and don’t really understand why they might be dangerous. Therefore avoid giving them one to hold. Also, ensure you are not carrying a baby or small child in your arms if you are holding a sparkler. They could reach out and grab them unexpectedly and burn themselves.

**Sun safe**

We know that young children burn quicker than adults as their skin is 15 times thinner than an adults. Please remember that the skin does not have to be peeling or blistering to be burned. If the skin is pink or red it is sunburnt.

**Best ways to protect your child and yourself:**

• Spend time in the shade when the sun is at its strongest, between 11am and 3pm

• Cover up with a t-shirt, hat and sun glasses.
- A long sleeved t shirt helps protect delicate skin and a hat with a brim shades the face and back of neck.
- Use a sunscreen with at least SPF 15 and 4 stars on the parts you can’t cover. Put lots of cream on and reapply often, especially if your child has been in the water. Remember that suncream does not give 100% protection and that clothing and shade help too.

For more information check out the link to Sunsmart at Cancer Research UK [here](#).