

Prevention of Burns in Elderly

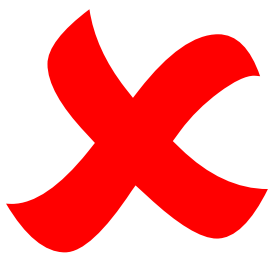
Factsheet

- As we age our skin becomes thinner, more fragile and drier thereby burning at a lower temperature, more quickly and more deeply.
- Reduction in our reaction time, dexterity and our mobility also make burn injury worse
- This means our ability to give good first aid is even more important
- Scald burns are most common in adults over 80 years old*, especially from tea/coffee and bath/shower

*Data obtained from Burns Registry of Australia and New Zealand (BRANZ) 2020



- ✓ Do set your hot water system to a safe 45°C
- ✓ Do use smaller pots, pans and lighter kettles
- ✓ Do put a hot drink down on a stable surface, for example a table, before sitting. Only when you are settled should you pick up a hot drink
- ✓ Do remove hot water bottles and wheat bags/heat packs from bed before you get in
- ✓ Do turn off the electrical blanket before you get in bed
- ✓ Do keep clothing away from any naked flames or heaters
- ✓ Do keep skin at least a metre away from any heaters



- ✗ Do not use accelerants like petrol to start a BBQ or clean metal surfaces.
- ✗ Do not wear loose clothing while cooking.
- ✗ Do not underestimate the speed and skill of toddlers or small children if you are caring for them
- ✗ Do not smoke in bed



First Aid for Burns

If you, or someone you know is burnt, take the following actions:

1. Remove clothing and jewellery
2. Apply cool running water to the burn for **20 minutes** (effective up to 3 hours after injury)
Spraying water or alternating wet cloths can help if limited water
If no water available a hydrogel burn first aid dressing can be used until water available. Caution use on large %TBSA due to hypothermia
Do NOT use ice, butter, creams or alternatives
3. Cover burn with clean cloth and keep the patient warm
4. Seek medical attention for any burn bigger than 3cm; or with blisters; or if any other concerns