Prevention of Hot Water Bottles Burns
Factsheet

- Hot water bottles are comforting for warmth or can assist with injury treatment. Incorrect use can result in serious burns.
- Hot water bottle burns are common in winter months for both adults and children*.
- They occur when filling a hot water bottle or expelling air from the bottle. Rubber hot water bottles perish, increasing the risk of leaks or splitting at the seams – especially if placed under pressure by a person lying on it in bed.
- They can be deep, painful and may require long hospital treatment, including skin grafts, and often result in permanent scarring.
- **Young children and elderly have fragile skin and their skin burns deeper and more quickly than adults and at lower temperatures**

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

- Do replace hot water bottles every 12 months.
- Do check hot water bottles for damage before each use.
- Do choose a hot water bottle with a large opening to reduce the risk of splashing when filling.
- Do pour slowly and do not overfill.
- Do ensure the plug is properly sealed to prevent leakage.
- Do use a cover or wrap a towel around the bottle.
- Do remove the bottle before you get into bed.
- Do store empty hot water bottle in a cool, dry location.

- Do not use boiling water to fill a hot water bottle.
- Do not fill a hot water bottle near children.
- Do not warm in a microwave or oven.
- Do not use a hot water bottle in a bed fitted with an electric blanket.
- Do not lean, roll, lie or press against a hot water bottle.

**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

For more information go to [www.anzba.org.au](http://www.anzba.org.au)