

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