

COMMUNITY



Tap Water Burns

Tap water burns are 100 percent preventable. Those most likely to suffer from them are young children, older adults and people with disabilities. These high-risk groups also are less likely to survive the injury, spend more time in the hospital and the recovery process is more difficult.

Most tap water burns happen in the bathroom or other bathing areas. To prevent them from happening, follow these tips:

1. Set your water heater no higher than 120 degrees F.
2. Provide adequate and constant supervision.
3. Do not leave the bathroom unattended while tub is filling.
4. Fill tub to desired level and turn water off before getting in.
5. Avoid flushing toilets, running water or using dish or clothes washers while anyone is showering to avoid sudden change in water temperature.
6. Turn the faucet to COLD position when not in use.
7. Install grab bars and non-slip flooring if someone is unsteady or weak; use a shower chair or stool if difficulty standing. Have a way to call for help.
8. Install anti-scalding devices that interrupt the flow of water when the temperature reaches a set number.
9. Reinforce these recommendations with all baby-sitters and care providers.

A safe water temperature for bathing is no higher than 100 degrees F. It doesn't take long for someone to receive a third-degree tap water burn.

Water Temperature	Time to Third-Degree Burn
155 degrees F	1 second
148 degrees F	2 seconds
140 degrees F	5 seconds
133 degrees F	15 seconds
127 degrees F	1 minute
124 degrees F	3 minutes
120 degrees F	5 minutes
100 degrees F	Safe temperature for bathing

For more information on burn prevention, call University Medical Center's injury prevention educator at (559) 459-4342.