

Hot drinks are the most common cause of burns to young children

16 October 2019



Credit: University of Bristol

New research has shown that hot drink scalds were the commonest cause of children under five presenting to emergency departments, and that only one in four children received adequate first aid before getting to hospital. These two key findings have led to the design of a national campaign called SafeTea launched today, Wednesday 16 October, National Burns Awareness Day.

The campaign to reduce [burn injuries](#) to young [children](#) has been led by research from the Children's Burns Research Centre. The center, based at the Bristol Royal Hospital for Children, is a collaboration between University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust and the universities of Bristol, Cardiff and UWE Bristol.

SafeTea aims to reduce hot drink scalds to young children and promote burns first aid. The [target audience](#) is parents, grandparents and carers of children under five across the UK.

The key messages of the campaign are to:

- Keep hot drinks away from young children;

- First aid for burns is: COOL, CALL, COVER;
- Never carry a hot drink whilst carrying a baby;
- Never pass a hot drink over the heads of young children;
- Make a SafeTea zone: a safe place for hot drinks in your home, out of reach of small children.

The research has shown that more than 50,000 children in the UK attend [hospital](#) with burns each year, with the majority happening to children under five. Hot drinks account for 60 percent of hospital attendances with burns in children under three years—or 30 young children every day across the UK.

Alan Emond, Professor of Community Health in the Bristol Medical School, said: "The key messages of SafeTea are: keep hot drinks out of reach of children, never pass a hot drink over a child, or hold a drink and a baby at the same time.

"If a child is burned, the correct first aid is Cool, Call, Cover: COOL the area under running water for 20 minutes; CALL NHS Direct or 999; COVER the area with clingfilm. The moments following a [burn](#) are the most critical time for preventing long-term damage and scarring."

Professor Alison Kemp, from Cardiff University's School of Medicine, added: "There are thousands of incidents of hot drink scalds every year, where potentially devastating injuries could be prevented with a few simple steps.

"Burns from hot drinks can cause serious and extensive skin damage to a young child, with lifelong scarring and the need for sustained medical treatment into adulthood. That's why we are reminding parents to keep hot drinks well out of reach. Hot drinks can cause damage to a child's skin even after 30 minutes. If a child is burned, the recommended first aid is to cool the area under

running water for 20 minutes."

Provided by University of Bristol

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