



Burn Safety for Tweens and Teens



— **NewYork-Presbyterian**
— Weill Cornell Medical Center



Each year, thousands of older kids and teens get burned by things that they didn't even know could hurt them. At your age, you are probably doing more things on your own now, but with this freedom comes a responsibility for safety. Here is some information on burns and how to stay safe.

What is a burn?

A burn is damage to your skin caused by heat, cold, chemicals, radiation, or electricity. Burns can happen in less than one second, but their effects can last a lifetime.

How can I get burned?

Burns can happen at home, school, or any place you go. Each year, thousands of kids get burned from eating, cooking, bathing, or being around fire. Some examples of how you can get burned include:

- **Hot liquids (scalds):** water in the tub/shower, food, or drinks
- **Fire:** candles, fireworks, matches/lighters, cooking
- **Hot objects (contact burns):** irons, ovens, toasters
- **Electricity:** overloaded outlets, broken wires, touching electrical equipment
- **Chemicals:** household cleaners
- **Radiation:** sunburns

How can I protect myself from getting a burn?

You should be extra careful when around things that can cause burns, like cooking in the kitchen or being near someone using fire. Here are some ways to prevent a burn injury:

Fire Safety:

- Never play with or misuse fire, matches, lighters, or gasoline. Stay away from people who do.
- Online videos of stunts with fire may look cool, but doing them can hurt or kill you or your friends.
- Make sure matches and lighters are kept away from babies and young children. If you find matches and lighters, ask an adult to move them to a safe place.
- Keep gasoline and other chemicals far away from all sources of fire including candles, matches, lighters, stoves, and furnaces.
- Never use gasoline, kerosene, or other chemicals to start a fire or make it bigger.
- When using candles, place them off the floor and out of reach of young children.
- Clear a 3-foot area around candles to prevent anything from catching on fire.
- Do not play with or use fireworks. They are illegal in many states, including New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.
- Stay at least 500 feet (1½ football fields) away from any fireworks display.



- Use sparklers outside only, with adult supervision, and pointing away from your head and body.
- Stay at least 5 feet away from campfires and fire pits.
- Avoid using drugs or alcohol, especially near fire.

Kitchen Safety

- Always stay in the kitchen while cooking.
- Turn pot and pan handles inward on the stove and cook on the back burners.
- While cooking, wear short sleeves or tight-fitting clothes and keep long hair tied back.
- Always let food and drinks cool down before carrying, serving, eating, or drinking.
- Never use your lap as a table for hot food or drinks.
- Keep the stove area clear of spray cans, oven mitts, paper, or anything that can catch on fire.
- When heating food in the microwave, use a cover that allows steam to escape and microwave-safe cookware.
- Avoid putting aluminum foil or other metal in the microwave.
- After microwaving, open the container or bag away from your face and only after the food has cooled.

Home Safety

- Avoid overloading outlets with too many plugs and cords—use a power strip instead.
- Make sure appliances and extension cords are in good condition. If they are broken, don't use them and tell an adult right away.

- Know and practice your home fire escape plan with your family.
- Be careful when using flat irons, clothing irons, or other appliances and keep the device and the cord out of reach of young children.

Sun Safety:

- Always wear sunscreen when outdoors and choose a sunscreen that protects from ultraviolet A (UVA) and B (UVB) sunlight, is water resistant, and has an SPF (sun protection factor) of 15 or higher.
- Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside and reapply every 1-2 hours, and after swimming or activity that causes sweating.
- Limit your time in the sun, and if possible, stay indoors between 10am – 4pm when the sun is the strongest.
- When outdoors, wear sunglasses (with UV protection), a hat, and a long sleeve t-shirt and pants when possible.
- Avoid tanning beds.

What to do if there is a fire:

- Stay calm.
- Do not try to put out the fire.
- Use your fire escape plan to get out right away. Do not bring belongings with you.
- Close the door behind you.
- Call 911 immediately and tell an adult.
- Get out and stay out! Do not go back inside until you have been told that it is safe to do so.



Tweens, Teens and Burns:

- Scalds and fire are the leading causes of burns for older children and teens.
- Each year, approximately 5,000 children suffer burns and injuries from fireworks.
- Children aged 10 – 14 years are at highest risk of burns and injuries from using gasoline.



What to do if I get burned?

Stop the burn:

- Stop, drop, and roll if your clothes are on fire.
- Take off your clothes if they are soaked with hot liquids or chemicals.
- Remove the burned clothing. If it's stuck, leave it.

Cool the burn:

- Use cool water on the burned areas. Avoid ice and cold water.

Clean the burn:

- Keep the area clean and do not apply creams, ointments, butter, toothpaste, sprays, or other home remedies.

Wrap the burn:

- Cover the burn with a clean, dry cloth or towel.

Call for help:

- Dial 911, tell an adult, and get medical help right away.



The William Randolph Hearst Burn Center at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center is one of the largest and busiest burn centers in the nation. We treat nearly 5,000 patients—one-third of whom are kids—each year.

By providing all phases of treatment—from the emergency response to rehabilitation—to patients and families who have suffered a burn injury, the Burn Center provides the expertise, resources, and continuity of care needed to get the best results.

To make an appointment to see a doctor or if you would like to learn more about burn prevention, please call the Hearst Burn Center at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center:

Main Office/Appointments: (212) 746 – 5410

Burn Outreach/Education: (212) 746 – 5417

**William Randolph Hearst Burn Center at
NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital**

525 East 68th Street, L706, New York, NY 10065

<http://nyp.org/services/burn-center.html>

If you or your family member gets burned, call 911 and seek immediate medical attention!

This information is brief and general. It should not be the only source of your information on this health care topic. It is not to be used or relied upon for diagnosis or treatment. It does not take the place of instructions from your doctor. Talk to your health care providers before making a health care decision.

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