

# Preventing burn injuries in the home



# What is a burn?

A burn is an injury to the skin usually caused by heat, but can also be caused by chemicals, friction or electricity.

Every year in the UK around 1000 people aged 65 years and over are admitted to a specialist burns service for treatment of a burn injury.

Most of these injuries are accidental and occur at home.

Older adults are less likely to survive a big burn injury or have to stay in hospital longer for treatment and rehabilitation. Also, they are likely to require more follow-up appointments for dressing changes and scar management.

However, the majority of burns are preventable, so we've brought together some tips to help reduce your risk.



# Kitchen

Ensure your cooking space is free from all flammable items such as tea towels or kitchen roll.

When you're using the hob, turn pan handles inwards and cook on the back ring where possible.

If you have an electric hob, be careful not to touch it even after it has been off for a while – they can stay hot for some time.

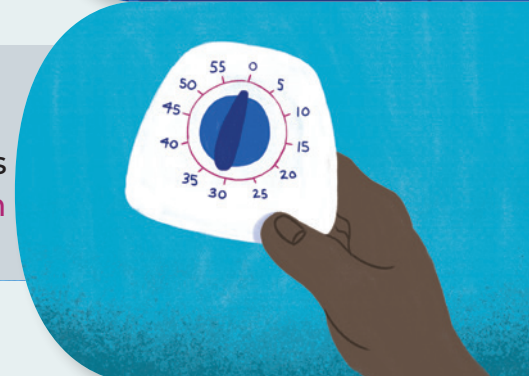
When heating food in the microwave, use microwave-safe cookware with a cover that allows steam to escape. Always use oven mitts to remove hot dishes.

When you're frying food, use a lid or splash guard to prevent hot grease spitting.

Don't leave food cooking unattended.

Set a timer to remind you to turn off the oven, grill or hob.

Wear short or tight-fitting sleeves and keep long hair tied back. Ensure head scarves are not hanging loose when you're cooking.







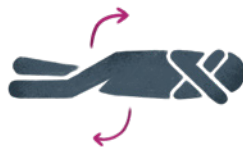
## STOP

When your clothes catch on fire, rapid movement worsens the fire.



## DROP

As soon as you stop, drop immediately and carefully to the ground.



## ROLL

Cover your face and roll back and forth until the fire is out.

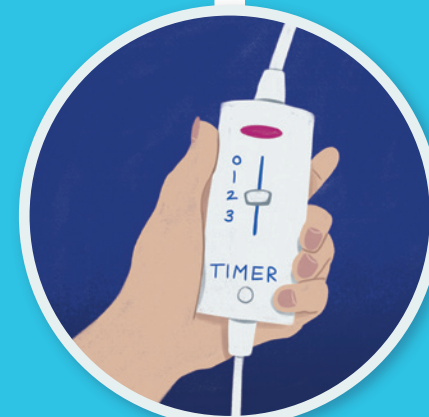
## Bathroom



- Run the cold water first and then add hot water afterwards to get it to the right temperature.
- Make sure your bath or shower isn't too hot before you get in.
- Use a thermometer to check it's not too hot, not your hands or feet. The ideal temperature is 37°C.
- To prevent falls into hot water, install a grab-rail, non-slip mat and/or a shower chair.
- Consider installing a radiator cover to reduce your risk of contact burns.

## Bedroom

- If you use an electric blanket, use one with a timer that **automatically switches off**. If you have any continence issues, talk to your doctor before using one.
- Hot water bottles should be used with caution. Please refer to the hot water bottle instructions on the following page.
- Avoid placing a heating pad or hot water bottle directly against your skin – wrap in a towel or use a cover. **Don't** leave it in the same place for more than 20 minutes.
- If possible, keep furniture at least **four feet** away from heat sources
- Do not** smoke in bed.
- Never** leave unattended candles burning.



## Hot water bottle instructions

- 1 Check the imprint on the side of the bottle ('daisy wheel' – see picture) to find the date of manufacture. **Don't use hot water bottles more than two years old.**
- 2 Remove the hot water bottle cover and check for any holes or damage to the rubber before filling.
- 3 Use boiled, but **not boiling**, water to fill your hot water bottle as the impurities in tap water can cause the rubber to perish. Allow the boiled water to cool for **at least five minutes** before pouring.
- 4 Hold your hot water bottle over the sink when filling. **Only fill to two-thirds full.** Squeeze out any air from the top of the bottle before screwing the stopper in tightly.

First section of the wheel = first month of the year

2 dots = indicates 2nd week of production in January

22 = year of production

This diagram means the hot water bottle was produced on the second week of January in 2022.



Even if we do everything possible to reduce risk, sometimes accidents still happen.

Knowing the correct First Aid and applying it quickly, **within three hours**, of a burn can reduce the seriousness of the injury.

## Cool, Call and Cover

**These actions will reduce pain, swelling and the risk of complications which cause scarring.**

**Remove the cause of the burning as soon as possible.**

This might mean helping someone away from a hot radiator. Flames should be smothered with a blanket or fire blanket. Don't put yourself at risk of getting burnt as well.

**Run the burn under cool or lukewarm water for 20 minutes as soon as possible after the injury.**

This can be beneficial up to three hours after a burn. Never use ice or iced water.

**Remove any clothing or jewellery near the burnt area of skin.**

However, if anything is stuck to the burnt skin then leave it there, as removing it could cause more damage.

**Lay cling film loosely over the burn.**

This can help stop it getting infected.

**Use painkillers to treat pain.**

Paracetamol or ibuprofen can work well.

**Seek medical advice if the pain doesn't get better.**

You can **call 111** who will advise you on what to do next.





# Safety measures

- ✓ Install a smoke alarm and carbon dioxide detector on every floor of your home. Test these **monthly**.
- ✓ Replace smoke alarms every **ten years** and carbon dioxide detectors every **five years**.
- ✓ If you have a visual or hearing impairment, install vibrating or flashing alarms.
- ✓ Practice your fire escape plan.
- ✓ Contact your local fire and rescue service for **free assistance** with these safety measures.



Contact your local fire and rescue service to request a Safe & Well visit for **free assistance** with these safety measures.