

Infants at highest risk for childhood burns

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Hot beverages, hair irons most often the cause, British study found.

(HealthDay)—One-year-old infants are 10 times more likely to suffer burns and scalds than older children, and the main causes of these injuries are hot drinks and hair irons, a new British study finds.

Researchers analyzed data from more than 1,200 [children](#) younger than 16 who were treated for burns and scalds at five emergency rooms, one burn-assessment unit and three regional children's burn units across the United Kingdom.

Of those youngsters, 58 percent were scalded, 32 percent had contact burns and about 9 percent had burns from other causes, according to the study. About 17 percent of the children were admitted to a burn unit, and the remainder were treated in an emergency room.

The researchers found that 72 percent of the children were younger than

5, and most of the injuries occurred in 1-year-old infants.

All of the scald injuries were suffered at home, and hot drinks accounted for 55 percent of such injuries among [young children](#), according to the study, which was published online Feb. 3 in the journal *Archives of Diseases in Childhood*. In nearly half the cases, a child was scalded when reaching up and pulling down a container with a hot drink—most often tea.

Half of the 155 scalds among youngsters aged 5 to 16 were caused by hot water—mostly from spills while preparing food, said Professor Alison Mary Kemp, of the Institute of Primary Care and Public Health at Cardiff University.

Nearly all the scalds occurred on the front of the body, mostly on the face, arms, and upper torso in younger children and the lower torso, legs and hands in [older children](#).

There were nearly 300 contact burns suffered by children younger than 5, and 81 percent of those were caused by touching hot items in the home, the researchers found. Hair straighteners or irons accounted for 42 percent of these injuries, followed by stove-top heating elements at 27 percent.

Almost half of the contact burns among older children occurred outdoors. Two-thirds of all contact burns involved the hands.

The researchers said children account for up to half of all burns and scalds treated at hospitals. Such injuries can cause lifelong scarring or deformity or even death.

Product-design changes and increased awareness among parents and other caregivers are among the measures needed to reduce the number of

scalds and burns suffered by children, the researchers said.

More information: The American Academy of Pediatrics has more about [preventing and treating burns](#).

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