

# Smartphone app aims to prevent burns in children

July 19 2016, by Kim Lyell

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Scalds from hot drinks account for 20 per cent of all burns in children. Credit: University of Queensland

A collaboration between injury prevention researchers at The University of Queensland and digital health company [iPug](#) has resulted in a 21st Century approach to tackling childhood scalds.

A team from the Centre for Children's Burns and Trauma Research was looking for a way to reduce the number of hot drink [burns](#) in young children.

Burns researcher Jacquii Burgess said the team contacted iPug, which had developed apps using game design elements for recruiting and engaging people in [public health campaigns](#) and clinical trials.

The partnership led to the Cool Runnings smartphone app designed to educate parents about how to prevent hot drink and other burn injuries, and about correct first-aid treatment.

Ms Burgess said Cool Runnings was the first app to use gamification strategies to help prevent injury.

"Scalds from hot drinks account for 20 per cent of all burns in children, with those under two at highest risk," She said.

"Babies and toddlers grow and develop so rapidly that it's sometimes hard to recognise they can now reach that coffee mug on a benchtop.

"Our research has found that burns treatment has improved significantly over the past 20 years or so, but there has been no decrease in the number of children presenting with hot beverage scalds.

iPug CEO Steve Huff said being able to use world-first technology to combat childhood injuries was an amazing opportunity.

"iPug's patent-pending technology chooses the right message for the right person on the right device, then rewards them for engaging in the message," Mr Huff said.

"In the spirit of gaming, parents are rewarded with points and badges when they demonstrate what they have learned."

Ms Burgess said the primary aim of the app was to increase parents' knowledge and motivate behaviour change to prevent hot drink scalds

from occurring.

If successful, it could be applied to other injury prevention campaigns.

The Centre for Children's Burns and Trauma Research is part of the UQ Child Health Research Centre within the Centre for Children's Health Research – a partnership with Child Health Queensland and the Queensland University of Technology.

iPug is a digital [health](#) company that uses innovative technology to effectively deliver real-time quality research results and public health campaigns.

Provided by University of Queensland

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