

TAP WATER SCALD PREVENTION

Tap water scalds are almost completely preventable, through a combination of behavioral and environmental changes. Tap water scalds, common among young children, older adults and people with disabilities, are often more severe than cooking related scalds. For these high risk groups, hospitalization is longer and recovery more difficult.

Tap water scalds to children usually occur when a child is left unattended in the bathroom for even a brief time. This may happen when he or she is placed in water that is too hot, being bathed by an inexperienced caregiver (baby-sitter or older sibling), are in the tub when another child turns on the hot water, or when the child falls into the tub.

Tap water scalds to older adults or someone with a disability usually happen when they slip or fall in the tub or shower, when a caregiver fails to recognize that the water is too hot, when water temperature fluctuates due to running water in other parts of the home, or when a faucet or plumbing fixture malfunctions and the person is unable to escape a sudden burst of scalding water.

The safest temperature for bathing is about 100 degrees Fahrenheit / 37° C.

- ✓ **Adequate and constant supervision is the single most important factor in preventing tap water scalds.** Provide constant adult supervision of young children, anyone who may experience difficulty removing themselves from hot water on their own, or people who may not recognize the danger associated with turning on the hot water. If you must leave the bathroom when bathing a child, take them with you.
- ✓ Fill tub to desired level and turn water off before getting in. Run cool water first, then add hot. Turn hot water off first. This can prevent scalding in the event someone should fall in while the tub is filling. Mix the water thoroughly and check the temperature by moving your elbow, wrist or fingers with spread fingers through the water before allowing someone to get in. The water should feel warm, hot to touch.
- ✓ Do not leave the bathroom unattended while the tub is filling.
- ✓ Turn the faucet to the “COLD” position when not in use if the tub has a single faucet handle.
- ✓ Clearly mark the “HOT” water position on faucets.
- ✓ Do not allow young children or a person with a mental disability to adjust the water temperature.
- ✓ When bathing young children, seat the child facing away from faucets and so he or she can not reach the faucet. Turn the faucet to the “COLD” position.
- ✓ Set water heater thermostats to deliver water at a temperature no higher than 120° F/

