

Flame burns are the leading cause of burn injury for adolescents aged 11–19



Burns Safety and Adolescents



Almost everyone in their lifetime will suffer a burn injury. Most are small and, although still extremely painful, will heal quickly.

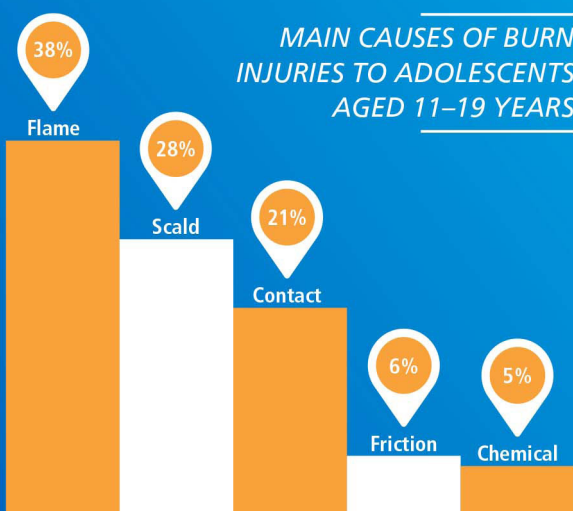
Severe burn injury can be life threatening. They are all painful and can drastically affect many aspects of your life.

The majority of burns are PREVENTABLE and by being aware and making safe choices you can help to keep yourself and your family and friends safe!

Causes

The most common cause of burn injury for adolescents is through fire use and misuse. Older children and young adults have a greater access to dangerous substances including accelerants which aid the spread of fire.

Many burns occur when experimenting with materials and accelerants or 'testing the boundaries' with high risk activities.





How can adolescents stay safe?

Reduce the risk of burns by:

- Discuss group pressure and considered decision making. Remember that by-standers can be hurt when risk taking behaviour occurs.
- Take care if using fire, flammable material or electricity as they are unpredictable.
- Discuss the dangers of flammable materials and identifying symbols.
- Store chemicals and poisonous materials in original containers – never mix chemicals or store them in drinking bottles.
- Wear protective clothing when using substances that may be unsafe.
- Always extinguish fires and campfires with water, never sand or dirt.
- Use power boards instead of 'piggy-backing' double adapters.
- Make sure electrical appliance cords are regularly checked for frays or damage.
- Sit at least a metre from the heater when keeping warm.
- Keep drying clothes at least a metre away from the heater.
- Keep candles away from curtains and other materials and never leave them unattended.
- Purchase and use oven mitts.



Follow heating instructions for wheat bags and hot water bottles and remove them prior to getting in bed.

Switch off electric blankets prior to getting in bed.

Never use heat packs or hot water bottles directly on skin.

Keep a fire blanket and fire extinguisher near the kitchen and easily accessible.

Talk with your family about safety – everyday situations are ideal to use as examples. Discuss unsafe scenarios and the consequences that could happen as a result of poor decision making or lack of judgment.



Here is a common scenario which could result in a serious burn injury. Being independent means being more responsible for your own safety, what would you do in this situation?

What are some of the possible short and long term consequences of this scenario? Turn the page for discussion points.



Based on a true story. Chris Suffered full thickness burns to 60% of his body.

Why are adolescents at risk?

Adolescents don't always think about the long-term consequences of their actions.

Discuss some of the possible outcomes of risk taking and unsafe behaviour:

- **PHYSICAL** Scarring for life, skin looks different
- **SOCIAL** Losing independence, inability to actively participate in sports
- **FINANCIAL** Hospital costs, ongoing health costs
- **EMOTIONAL** Being responsible for injuring or dealing with killing someone else, or seriously injuring themselves
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL** Lower self-confidence, trauma

Adolescents between the ages of 11–19 are developing their identity and working out where they fit with their friends. They are:

- changing rapidly – emotionally and physically
- becoming more independent from parents and may spend up to 80% more time with their friends
- often influenced by their friends more than their parents
- often drawn to a 'group mentality' where peer pressure can encourage risk taking behaviour.

Risk taking behaviour is often used to gain attention from friends or parents, or out of anger, revenge or mischief making.

With support and guidance, they also:

- develop abilities to identify realistic consequences, this may happen slowly for some
- become less selfish and show greater consideration for others, including how consequences may affect their family and others around them.

Burns First Aid



+ REMOVE

Remove all jewellery from around the burn area. Remove any clothing and nappies around the burn area **unless it is stuck to the skin.**

+ COOL

Cool the burn under cool running water for 20 minutes. Cool the burn, warm the patient.

DO NOT use ice or creams as this can further damage the skin.

+ COVER

Cover the burn loosely with cling wrap or a clean, damp lint-free cloth.

+ SEEK

Seek immediate medical advice if the burn is:

- + larger than a 20 cent coin
- + on the face, hands, groin or feet
- + deep or infected
- + caused by chemicals, electricity or if signs of inhalation injury (blackening around mouth or nostrils, swelling of airways) are evident.

In an Emergency call 000 or 112 if your mobile is out of range or credit.

For further medical information contact your local Burns Unit or Hospital.

Kidsafe is here to assist you. This is general information and if you require specific advice please contact us to discuss further.

Kidsafe is the leading independent, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the prevention of unintentional death and serious injury to children aged 0–15 years. We are committed to reducing the incidence and impact of unintentional injury.



For more information, contact Kidsafe:
www.kidsafe.com.au

