

Fire and burn safety tips for your family



When it comes to protecting your family, fire and burn safety should be at the top of your list.

Everyday precautions make all the difference in preventing serious injuries. From creating a fire escape plan to teaching kids about hot surfaces, being prepared is essential.

Install smoke alarms throughout your house, including outside and inside every bedroom, to alert your family when there is a fire. Test your smoke alarms often to ensure they are working and so your kids can become familiar with the sound.



Create a fire escape plan for your family and put that plan into action by practicing it at least two times a year (in the day and at night). During a fire escape, younger kids should be accompanied by an adult. Your family's fire escape plan might include showing your kids how to guard themselves from smoke, or to feel doorknobs for heat before exiting a room. It is also important to identify two exits out of every room.



Remind your kids to “stop, drop and roll” to extinguish flames if their clothing catches fire. Keep in mind that kids' sleepwear is flame-resistant or tight-fitting in accordance with federal safety standards. This means that pajamas are the best sleepwear for your children.



Keep your kids away from space heaters, stovetops or anything else that gets hot to avoid burns. Lighters and matches are also a risk of catching fire. Misuse of lighters and matches can increase the risk of causing a fire.



“Burns from hot liquids are the most common types of burns we see in kids,” says Leigh J. Spera, MD, Medical Director of the Burn Program at Riley Children's Health. “So, another important tip is to keep hot liquids like coffee, tea, cocoa and soups out of their reach. Set these items on stable surfaces like a tabletop and keep them back away from the edge where they can reach up and pull them over. Never let kids take items out of the microwave as they may tip the item and spill it on themselves. We understand that accidents can happen, even in a few seconds, so trying to anticipate and protect from likely exposures with proper supervision is key.”

If a serious burn occurs, call 911 or go to the nearest Riley Children's Health Emergency department.

The Burn Program at Riley Children's offers care for children who have experienced various types of burns and is verified by the American Burn Association and the American College of Surgeons.

For more information on fire safety visit healthchildren.org, nfpa.org or redcross.org.

This information was medically reviewed by the Burn Program, part of Indiana's longest-standing Level I Pediatric Trauma Center at Riley Hospital for Children in downtown Indianapolis.



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