

**Office of Integrated Health**  
**Health Information in a Nutshell**

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## Scalding

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Scalding incidents cause life threatening and painful injuries. “Scalds, which are burns attributed to hot liquids or steam, account for 33%--58% of all patients hospitalized for burns in the United States (CDC MMWR 2009) and people with disabilities are at a high risk of these burns.

Scalding can happen quickly and at many different temperatures.

Water Temperature:	Time for a third degree burn to occur:
155° F	1 second
148 ° F	2 seconds
140 ° F	5 seconds
133° F	15 seconds
127 ° F	1 minute
124 ° F	3 minutes
120 ° F	5 minutes
100 ° F	Safe temperature for bathing

### Treatment

Remove the person from the water immediately if they show any signs of distress, pain, the skin becomes pink/red and if you sense something is wrong. Obtain immediate emergency assistance; when in doubt call 911. Do not use home remedies to treat burns instead follow your first aid training and seek out professional medical assistance immediately.

### Prevention

Prevention requires focus, training, reminders and ongoing monitoring. Providers should have specific protocols in place to ensure prevention. Burns are extremely painful and have life threatening consequences.

“The safest temperature for bathing is about 100 degrees Fahrenheit / 37o C.”

<http://burnprevention.org/scald-prevention/>

### Recommendations

Have anti- scalding features in bathrooms and sinks installed such as thermostatic mixing valves, temperature activated flow reducers and pressure balancing valves. Check with a certified plumber to determine what anti-scalding system is right for your home and situation and to assure all of your water systems are working properly and are set up to avoid scalding injuries.

Check the water temperature using a thermometer before you place a person near or in water and assure the temperature is only slightly higher than normal body temperature or around 100 - 102°F or lower before exposing a person to the water.

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