***Newsletter/Blog Article***

**Scalds: A Burning Issue**

For an adult, spilling coffee or opening a bag of microwave popcorn might result in a minor scald (a burn caused by “wet heat” like steam or hot liquids). The area might be red and tender for a few days, but usually those types of burns take care of themselves. What is a minor inconvenience to an adult, however, might be a major injury to a child.

Children have thinner skin than adults, so hot food and drinks can burn them more easily. For example, hot drinks like coffee are often served at 175 degrees Fahrenheit or hotter. Liquid this hot can burn a young child’s skin in as little as one second. These scalds can leave lifelong scars or result in hospital stays or surgeries.

Many parents know to check bath and tap water to make sure it is not too hot for young children’s sensitive skin, but may not think about the dangers of hot food and drinks. Young children are natural explorers, testing themselves and their surroundings as they grow. Their motor skills are developing, so they’ll grab just about anything. Toddlers who are learning to walk will pull themselves up using whatever they can reach, including tablecloths that have hot foods and drinks sitting on them.

That’s why it’s so important to understand how and why common injuries like scalds happen—so parents can take precautions needed to keep their children safe. Help protect your little ones from scalds by following these tips:

**On Tables, Counters, and Other Surfaces**

* **Center it.** Put hot food and drinks out of reach and away from the edges of counters and tables. Avoid using tablecloths and runners that children can pull down.
* **Put a lid on it.** Use travel mugs or cups with tight-fitting lids for coffee and other hot drinks, even when you are at home.
* **Go solo.** Give your children their own seats. If they are sitting in your lap, spills from your hot food and drinks can burn them too.

**Around the Stove**

* **Turn it.** Turn the handles of pots and pans so they do not hang over the edge of the stove. Cook on the back burners when possible.
* **Tape it.** Mark a 3-foot “No Kids Zone” around the stove with tape or a mat.
* **Block it.** Use baby gates to block off busy areas, or put children in highchairs, play yards or other safe places when you cook.

**Using the Microwave**

* **Follow directions.** Follow manufacturer instructions and limit use to kids who are old enough to follow written directions.
* **Stir it.** Stir microwaved food after heating to get rid of hot spots.
* **Cool it.** Cool microwaved food and drinks for at least two minutes before serving.