

NEWS RELEASE

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New National Study Finds Decrease in Rate of Pediatric Burns

Yet alarming number of young children still being injured

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)- Burns are a common cause of pediatric injury worldwide, typically resulting from hot water, flames, hot surfaces, chemicals and electrical appliances. A recent study conducted by the Center for Injury Research and Policy of The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital, found that from 1990-2006 more than 2 million children younger than 21 were treated in hospital emergency departments for burn-related injuries. The good news that resulted from the 17-year study period is that researchers saw a 31 percent decrease in the rate of burn-related injuries. The bad news is that children are still being injured from burns – about 120,000 each year.

“The decrease in the burn-related injury rate over the study period is notable,” said study author Lara McKenzie, PhD, principal investigator at the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital. “However, the disproportionately high number of injuries and the severity of these burns to young children is still cause for concern.”

Data from the study, being released online October 5 and appearing in the November issue of *Pediatrics*, show that children younger than 6 accounted for more than half of all burn-related injuries. Among that age group, most injuries occurred in the home, and the majority (60 percent) resulted from thermal burns. The hands and fingers were the most frequently injured body parts (36 percent), followed by the head and face (21 percent).

Dr. McKenzie, also a faculty member of The Ohio State University College of Medicine, said that reasons why younger children suffered a majority of burn-related injuries during the study period may be due to parents underestimating the reach ability of toddlers, and the fact that younger children have thinner skin.

“Parents should be aware of the capability of reach that their toddler may have,” continued Dr. McKenzie. “Items that seem out of reach for young children may not be. That risk should be eliminated. Also, young children, especially those under age 6, have thinner skin, and the severity of a burn can be greater for them even at a reduced exposure time.”

Parents can help protect their children from burns by setting the water heater thermostat to no higher than 120 degrees Fahrenheit, keeping kids away from the stove, locking up chemicals and covering unused electrical outlets. Parents should prohibit young children from operating

microwaves or other electrical appliances, preparing hot food or drinks, and playing near the kitchen during food preparation.

“Burn-related injuries are potentially preventable with better education, warnings and instructions on consumer products,” said Dr. McKenzie. “Increased efforts are needed to improve burn prevention strategies and target households with young children.”

Data for this study were collected from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), which is operated by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The NEISS dataset provides information on consumer product-related and sports and recreation-related injuries treated in hospital emergency departments across the country.

The Center for Injury Research and Policy (CIRP) of The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital works globally to reduce injury-related pediatric death and disabilities. With innovative research as its core, CIRP works to continually improve the scientific understanding of the epidemiology, biomechanics, prevention, acute treatment and rehabilitation of injuries. CIRP serves as a pioneer by translating cutting edge injury research into education, policy and advances in clinical care. Learn more about CIRP at <http://www.injurycenter.org>.