

Disposable Lighters and Small Children

Children suffer the greatest number of burns and have the highest percentage of fire and burn deaths.

Burns are caused by:

- scalding hot water
- flame
- contact with a hot object
- electricity
- chemicals
- radiation

Flame burns occur from:

- matches and lighters
- cigarettes
- house fires
- flammable materials

Every year, many children under the age of five die from burns. Many of these fires are started by children with disposable cigarette lighters. Lighters can be a source of fascination for young children -- a brightly-colored plastic lighter looks like a toy and fits comfortably into a small child's hand.

Children are great imitators. They see their parents using lighters and tend to copy them. Small children are too young to understand the dangers of lighters, so parents should make sure that lighters are not available. It is also very important to talk to children about the dangers of fire and cigarette lighters.

Book matches are generally a safe alternative to disposable cigarette lighters, since most small children are unable to strike them. However, even matches should be hidden and children should never be left unattended for long periods of time.

Having smoke detectors in the home is also recommended.

First aid for minor burns

Apply cool water for 15-20 minutes, then wash area well with soap and water.

If the injury is a chemical burn, flush with water for 30 minutes and seek medical attention immediately.

Don't break blisters. Cover with a dry dressing.

Call the doctor at signs of infection, redness or swelling, or fever.

