

Fire and Burn-Related Hospitalizations in Saskatchewan Children

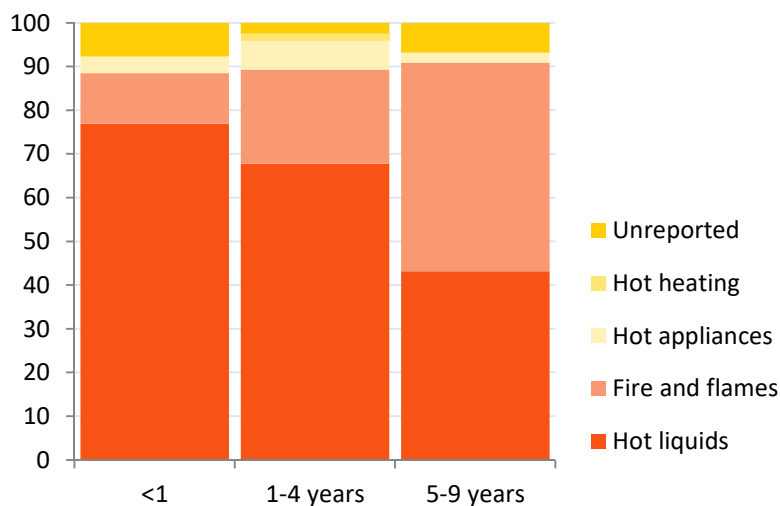
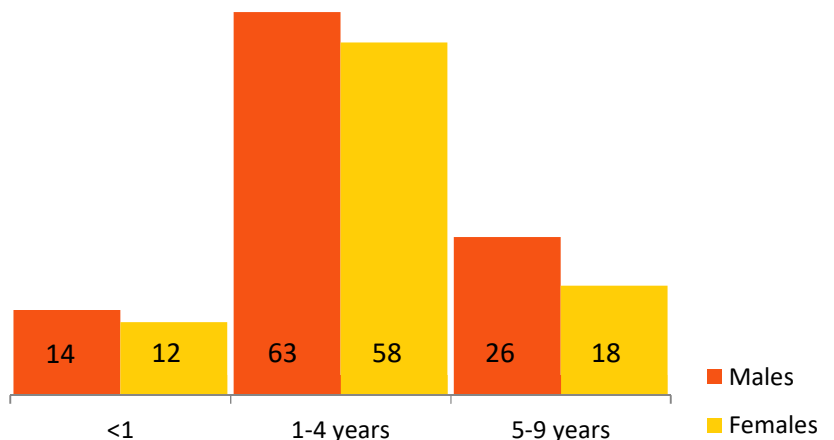
10 Years in Review (2004 – 2013)



Facts About Fire and Burn-Related Injuries

Between 2004 and 2013, 191 children under the age of 10 were hospitalized due to fire and burn-related injuries.¹ Fire and burns were the 4th leading cause of injury-related hospitalizations among children between the ages of 1 and 4 years and the 5th leading cause for children under the age of 1.

The children most likely to be hospitalized due to fire and burn-related injuries were those between the ages of 1 and 4 years (121 hospitalizations).



The cause of fire and burn-related hospitalizations differed with age.

Infants less than 1 year of age and children between 1 and 4 years of age were most frequently hospitalized due to burns from **hot liquids**.

Children aged 5 to 9 years were most often hospitalized due to injuries from **fire and flames**.

¹ These numbers only include the children who were hospitalized due to fire and burns. Children who were seen in emergency rooms or medical clinics, and those who did not receive medical treatment, are not included in these numbers.

Preventing Fire and Burn-Related Injuries

At each stage of development, children learn new skills (e.g., reaching, grabbing, climbing, exploring, and imitating the actions of others). It is important to look for the possible injury risks associated with each stage. Active supervision, the use of safety equipment (e.g., smoke alarms, electrical socket and radiator covers), and keeping the following information in mind will help to reduce the risk of fire and burn-related injuries.

Developmental Stages and Fire and Burn-Related Injuries

- Children are at an increased risk for burns because their skin is thinner than an adult's skin. A child's skin burns more quickly and deeply than an adult's at the same temperature.
- Infants less than 3 months old are already able to reach, close their hands into fists, and wave their arms and legs around. Infants may knock over things that are within reach, like hot liquids and foods. Avoid holding a baby while drinking hot liquids, eating, or cooking. Use a cup with a tight-fitting lid (e.g., travel mug) to avoid spills of hot liquids.
- As children become more mobile, they are able to move towards hot objects and appliances. Keep items that can cause burns and scalds out of children's reach (e.g., hot food and drinks). Keep cords for hot electrical appliances out of reach (e.g., irons, kettles, hair straighteners).
- Once children are able to stand, they can reach hot things on the stove. Turn pot handles in and use the back burners as much as possible.
- Children are naturally curious and like to imitate the behaviour of adults. Keep lighters, matches, and candles out of the reach of children. Use child-resistant lighters, and teach children to never play with lighters, matches, or candles. Always blow out candles before leaving a room.

Other Tips

- Place smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors on every level of the home and outside all bedrooms. Be sure to test the alarms and change the batteries as needed.
- Develop and practice a fire escape plan. Teach children to leave immediately in case of a fire; to crawl under smoke; and to stop, drop, and roll if their clothes catch on fire.
- Reduce the water temperature on the hot water tank to 49°C (120°F). The water will still be hot enough for baths and showers while keeping children safe from burns.

For more information about how to prevent burn-related and other injuries at each stage of a child's development, see www.preventchildinjury.ca.

For more information about fire and burn-related injuries, and other top causes of injury-related hospitalizations for Saskatchewan children and youth, please refer to the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute's report, *Child and Youth Injury in Saskatchewan 2004-2013* (see www.skprevention.ca, search 4-007).

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