

Know • Learn • Connect

National Burns Awareness Month

Campaign Toolkit



June 2017



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National Burns Awareness Month

The National Burns Awareness Month (1-30 June) aims to drive greater awareness amongst the Australian community of the correct first aid treatment for minor burns. National Burns Awareness Month is an initiative of the Julian Burton Burns Trust, Australia's leading community organisation dedicated to burn injury.

Know Injury has developed this toolkit to support Local Governments, community organisations and regional services to become involved in National Burns Awareness Month. Throughout June, Know Injury invites you to raise awareness of burns prevention and correct first aid by posting on social media and sending a press release to your local newspaper. You'll find everything you need to get started within this toolkit.

What can Local Governments and organisations do to promote National Burns Awareness month?

Using social media

National Burns Awareness Month is a great opportunity to get active on your social media accounts and help generate awareness within your community of how to prevent burns and apply correct first aid. In the following pages, Know Injury has provided social media templates for Twitter, Facebook, and blog posts and a media release for Local Governments and organisations to use throughout June.

National Burns Awareness Month has a twitter account (@burnawaremonth). The account will be active throughout National Burns Awareness Month. Please consider re-tweeting them or posting on the page about your upcoming events or stalls, photos of your event or your social media posts. The official hashtag for National Burns Awareness Month is #burnsawareness.

How else can your Local Government or organisation get involved?

- **Work with your local Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) office**
Mother groups, child care and schools could join forces with the local DFES: either visit the fire station or invite them to bring a fire engine to your event or premises. Bring the parents, grandparents or carers along too; while the children enjoy playing on a fire engine, the adults can develop their awareness of fire safety and burn prevention.
- **Awareness events and activities in the workplace or community**
Set up a stall or stand in your reception area, local shopping centre or weekend farmers market. Display posters, use local statistics (contact Know Injury) and hand out resources. Contact local radio or newspapers. Ask your communication team to cover the day, particularly on social media. Again, see if your local DFES would like to be involved.
- **Visit local schools** to present at an assembly on burns prevention and first aid.
- **Schedule a first aid training course** for your community members to attend.

Accessing local burns data

Is your Local Government or organisation interested in obtaining localised burns data for your community? If yes, Know Injury can provide you with information on the number of hospitalisations and deaths due to burns in your Local Government area or health region. Contact the Know Injury team at info@knowinjury.org.au or 9420 7212 for more information.

Communication templates

Facebook templates

Use the following templates to develop Facebook posts to promote burns awareness:

Example 1

[*Insert name*] is supporting National Burns Awareness Month to raise awareness of burns prevention and correct first aid. There is an increased risk of burns in the winter months as we start to heat our homes with fires, heaters, warm drinks and hot water bottles. Find out what you can do to keep your family safe this winter. #burnsawareness

Link: <*link to your burns prevention blog*>

Example 2

Correct first aid after a burn or scald injury can make a huge difference in recovery times and the severity of scarring. Know how to REMOVE-COOL-COVER. #burnsawareness

Link: <https://goo.gl/0oDFYa>

Example 3

Children aged 0-4 years have the highest rates of burn fatalities and hospitalisations. Don't let your family become a statistic #burnsawareness

Link: <https://goo.gl/0oDFYa>

Twitter templates

Use the following templates to develop twitter posts to promote burns awareness:

Example 1

June is National Burns Awareness Month; do you know the correct first aid for burns?
#burnsawareness <https://goo.gl/0oDFYa>

Example 2

WA children 0-4 years have the highest rates of burn deaths and hospitalisations. Keep your child & home safe this winter. <*link to prevention blog*> #burnsawareness

Example 4

Good first aid after a burn/scald can make a huge difference in recovery times & severity of scarring #burnsawareness <https://goo.gl/0oDFYa>

Example 5

Winter weather increases the risks of burns; make sure your home is prepared for the chilly season #burnsawareness <*link to prevention blog*>

Cool winter temperatures can bring burns risk

A serious burn injury is for life. The scars can be both physical and psychological and may present life-long challenges. June marks National Burns Awareness Month, which provides an opportunity to increase awareness of burns prevention and correct first aid treatment, which can help reduce the severity of the recovery period.

In 2014, 964 people were hospitalised in Western Australia due to a burn, with young children most at risk. There is an increased risk of burn injuries in the winter months as we begin to heat up our homes with fires, heaters, warm drinks and hot water bottles.

The Injury Control Council of Western Australia's Chief Executive Sandy Lukjanowski said "It is important to be aware of how to prevent and treat burns as the weather cools". "For those who experience a minor burn, immediate and correct first aid can have a huge impact on the severity of the injury".

[Insert name] is committed to raising awareness of this year's National Burns Awareness Month June 2017.

[insert mayor/CEO name] advises that "there are some simple actions you can take in your home to reduce the chance of burns, including keeping kettles, jugs, teapots, appliance cords and saucepan handles away from the edge of surfaces, keeping matches and lighters securely out of children's reach and unplugging and storing hair dryers, straighteners and curlers securely."

"It's also important to know the correct first aid to give in the event of a burn as it can greatly reduce the recovery time" [he/she] noted.

First aid for burns:

1. Remove all jewellery from around the burn area. Remove any clothing around the burn area unless it is stuck to the skin.
2. Cool the burn under cool running water for 20 minutes. This will stop the burning process which can continue for 2-3 hours if not cooled sufficiently.
3. NEVER use ice, oil, butter or ointments as this can further damage the skin.
4. Cover the burn loosely with a clean, damp lint-free cloth or dressing. This will reduce the chance of infection.

Professor Fiona Wood from the Fiona Wood Foundation said "Every intervention from the time of injury will influence the scar worn for life. Everyone can make a difference: clean cool running water at 15 to 18 degrees Celsius for 30 minutes will change a life."

It is recommended that you seek immediate medical advice if the burn is:

- larger than a 20 cent coin
- on the face, hands, groin or feet
- deep or infected
- caused by chemicals or electricity or if signs of inhalation injury (blackening around mouth or nostrils, swelling of airways) are evident

In an emergency call 000.

The Julian Burton Burns Trust provides a free downloadable [home burns safety checklist](#) for families seeking to reduce the risk of burns in their home.

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3. Specific Health Condition Analysis. Exposure to smoke, fire, flames, hot substances, hospitalisations by external cause (injury and poisoning)- Western Australia state. Western Australia: Department of Health WA; 2015.
4. Burns and scalds [Internet]. St John Ambulance Australia; Available from: http://stjohn.org.au/assets/uploads/fact%20sheets/english/FS_burns.pdf

ENDS

Media contact:

(Insert media contact)

Blog post template

From boiling water, to a hot cup of coffee or open fire place, burn injuries can occur anywhere and at any time - particularly for young children who are less aware of potential dangers in the home. In Western Australia in 2012, there were 178 hospitalisations for children aged 0-4 years due to a burn injury. While it can be hard to tame your young child's curiosity, you can take a few precautionary measures to prevent burns from happening - and know correct first aid treatment for burns in case they do.

Following a few simple precautions will help keep you and your children safe from potential burns.

The following tips for preventing burns are provided by the Julian Burton Burns Trust.

Water temperature

- Is your hot water delivered between 45 degrees and 50 degrees Celsius?
- Always test the water temperature with your wrist or elbow before bathing a baby, toddler, or young child.

Cooking

- Is the microwave out of reach of young children and a safe height for adults?
- Create a 'No Child Zone' while preparing and serving hot food and beverages
- Do not carry or hold a child while using the stove. Instead, move a highchair into the kitchen away from the stove where you can keep an eye on the child safely.
- Use back burners on the stove and keep pot handles and other hot items away from edges.

Electrical appliances and outlets

- Is your home fitted with a working electrical safety switch?
- Do you use power boards with surge protectors?
- Are electrical cords out of sight and reach of children?
- Cover unused electrical outlets with outlet covers.

Fires

- Do you have working smoke alarms installed?
- Do you have a fire blanket and fire extinguisher in or near the kitchen?
- Are children's nightwear labelled as 'Low fire danger'?
- Are there safety guards around fireplaces, stoves and heaters?
- Do you have a fire escape plan for your home?
- If you live in a bushfire prone area, does your family have a prepared and practised bushfire survival plan?
- Keep matches, lighters, and other flammable materials out of your child's reach. Set a good example for your children by not playing with these items.

Sunburns

- Does your family play in the shade, wear hats, sunscreen, sun smart clothing and shoes?
- Is at least 50% of your play and pool area protected from the sun's ultra violet rays by natural or shade structures?
- Do you have window shades on your car for young children?
- Do you have a first aid kit and extinguisher in your car?

Other

- Is there a first aid kit in your home? Check expiry dates.
- Do you remove hot water bottles and wheat bags before getting into bed?
- Do you replace your hot water bottles every year?
- Are chemicals and poisonous substances kept in original containers?
- Are all chemicals and poisonous substances stored in a secured area?
- Does everyone in the home know the triple zero (000) emergency number?

First aid for burns:

1. Remove all jewellery from around the burn area. Remove any clothing around the burn area unless it is stuck to the skin.
2. Cool the burn under cool running water for 20 minutes. This will stop the burning process which can continue for 2-3 hours if not cooled sufficiently.
3. NEVER use ice, oil, butter or ointments as this can further damage the skin.
4. Cover the burn loosely with cling wrap or a clean, damp lint-free cloth. This will reduce the chance of infection.

Seek immediate medical advice if the burn is:

- larger than a 20 cent coin
- on the face, hands, groin or feet
- deep or infected
- caused by chemicals, electricity or if signs of inhalation injury (blackening around mouth or nostrils, swelling of airways) are evident

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Organisations working in burns prevention and recovery

Julian Burton Burns Trust

National Burns Awareness Month is an initiative of the Julian Burton Burns Trust, which is Australia's leading non-profit organisation dedicated to burn injury. The Burns Trust works in collaboration with local communities and partners to influence behavioural and social change to reduce the incidence and impact of burn injury.

The Julian Burton Burns Trust was established in July 2005, after a need was identified for a national burns community care organisation. The Julian Burton Burns Trust aims to raise funds for burn prevention, care and research.

The Julian Burton Burns Trust has a great selection of resources, pamphlets, first aid lesson plans, checklists and videos (<http://www.burnstrust.com.au/prevention/national-burns-awareness-month/>) that you could incorporate into your National Burns Awareness Month events/stalls or distribute amongst the community.



You'll find the National Burns Awareness Month 2017 video [here](#).



Kidsafe WA

Kidsafe WA is the leading independent not-for-profit organisation dedicated to promoting safety and preventing childhood injuries and accidents in Western Australia. Kidsafe aims to prevent childhood death from unintentional injury and accidents and to reduce the severity of injuries to children via education, advocacy and research.

Kidsafe WA has burns and scalds fact sheets available for download from their [website](#).

 **Fact Sheet** 


Burns and Scalds

Burns and scalds are a significant problem in Western Australia. Almost 500 children a year are treated for a burn or scald at the Emergency Department of Princess Margaret Hospital for Children.

More than half of the children admitted to hospital for a burn or scald are under the age of five. Young children are at risk, as they are becoming increasingly mobile, but do not have the skills to assess dangers.

Severe burns and scalds can be extremely devastating to a child and their family, often requiring multiple hospital visits and leaving lifelong scarring. Most of these injuries are preventable. Common causes of burns and scalds to children include:

- Hot food and drink (e.g. hot tea and coffee).
- Hot water, often from bath water.
- Heaters and fires.
- Household and kitchen appliances (e.g. irons, ovens, stoves, microwaves, kettles and toasters).
- Lack of supervision around potential burn and scald hazards.
- Lack of working smoke alarms.



Burns
Burns are the result of contact with flames and hot objects.

Preventing Burns

- Install guards around fires, heaters and on top of stoves. Teach children why these are in place.
- Keep children out of dangerous areas such as the kitchen while preparing meals.
- Choose low fire-risk children's nightwear that is close fitting and made of less flammable material. Look for the fire risk label.

- Closely supervise children at BBQ's.
- Keep appliance cords out of reach of children.

House Fires

- The majority of fire and burn deaths to children occur in private dwellings such as houses, flats or caravans.
- Young children are at risk in house fires as they have a small lung capacity, are easily disoriented, and may try to hide. Older children are also at risk as they may try and put out the fire when it is not safe to do so.
- Older, poorer quality housing is at greater risk of fire. These homes are also less likely to have smoke alarms.
- The most common reasons for house fires are flammable items being too close to heaters, open fires, candles, careless smoking, unattended cooking and electric blankets¹.

Prevention Priorities

Surviving Fires

- Install smoke alarms, test their batteries regularly and replace them on the 1st of April every year.
- Develop a home fire escape plan and practice it with your family.
- Have fire extinguishers or fire blankets on hand to help deal with small fires.
- Practice 'GET DOWN LOW and GO GO GO' and 'STOP, DROP COVER AND ROLL' with your children.

Preventing Fires

- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children.
- Teach children fire safety rules and skills.
- Ensure heaters are away from curtains, furniture, clothing and other flammable material. Check you have turned them off when you go to bed.
- Install electrical safety switches to protect against faulty wiring or products. Check electrical appliances for frayed cords and that electrical power boards are not overloaded.

www.kidsafe.com.au protecting children from injury

Kidsafe has a [video](#) that outlines 'tips to keep kids safe from burns in your home'. It could be a great resource to post on your social media pages.



Fiona Wood Foundation

The Fiona Wood Foundation is an independent not-for-profit organisation that exists to reduce the devastation caused by the physical, psychological and social impacts of burn injury.

The Fiona Wood Foundation has a range of community resources available for download from their [website](#) including information for first aid education, post injury support, children's resources and general information.

Australian and New Zealand Burns Association

The Australian and New Zealand Burn Association (ANZBA) is the peak body for health professionals responsible for the care of the burn injured in Australia and New Zealand. ANZBA is dedicated to improving the lives of those affected by burn injury by encouraging higher standards of patient care through education, performance monitoring, research and promoting community awareness of burn injury prevention.

ANZBA has some great resources, fact sheets and videos for burns prevention, particularly for younger children (<http://anzba.org.au/prevention/>). Why not distribute the resources to your community or share the burns prevention video link on your social media?



Additional Background Information

What is a burn or scald?

A burn is an injury to the skin or other organic tissue primarily caused by heat or due to radiation, radioactivity, electricity, friction or contact with chemicals (1).

A scald is a type of burn when hot liquids destroy some or all of the cells in the skin or tissue (1).

Why are burns an issue?

It is estimated that each year worldwide, over 300,000 people die from fire-related burn injuries, with even more deaths from other burn injuries such as scalds, chemical burns and electricity (2).

In 2014, in Western Australia, exposure to smoke, fire, flames or hot substances was responsible for 964 hospitalisations, with just over 66% of these being male (3). In 2015, there were five deaths due to exposure to smoke, fire and flames in Western Australia (4). Even more concerning, there was an increase in the number of burns hospitalisations from 567 in 2003 to 974 in 2012 (5).

In 2012, fire, burns and scald injuries cost the Western Australia health system \$10 million (5). These costs include presentation at emergency departments, hospital admissions, other medical visits, and resources and emergency transport. Total costs in 2012 for fatalities and hospitalisations due to fire, burns and scalds are estimated at \$111 million, which includes costs relating to long term

care, loss of paid productivity and quality of life lost (5). The average cost of a fire, burn or scald injury during 2012 was \$140,379 (5).

In 2012, in Western Australia, the highest rate of deaths and hospitalisation for fire, burns, and scald injuries were in the 0-4 age group (5). Young children, men aged between 15-29 years, those living in remote WA, and Aboriginal people also had disproportionately higher rates of burns and scald injuries (6).

Injuries from burns and scalds can result in long hospital stays, with most patients requiring acute care followed by extensive periods of rehabilitation and outpatient visits (7). The severity of the burn can be determined by the size, thickness and location on the body as well as the age of the burn victim (7). Burn and scald treatments are therefore expensive, complex and resource intensive, with fires, burns and scald injuries contributing to the 5th highest mean cost of all injury areas in Western Australia in 2012 (5). Survivors of severe burns can experience long-term psychosocial consequences including depression, pain, grief and anxiety (8).

It has been suggested that knowledge of the correct first aid treatment for burns and scald injuries amongst the community is low with only 10-35% of individuals recalling the correct first aid procedures (9–11). The percentage is even lower amongst health workers with only 16-18.8% recalling correct burns first aid (12,13). The severity of the burn, depth of tissue damage, hospitalisation and subsequent need for surgical intervention can be reduced in burn victims who receive correct first aid treatment (14).

Applying cool running water onto a burn for at least 20 minutes is the most available and effective method of burns first aid (12,13). This year's National Burns Awareness Month campaign is encouraging people to Remove, Cool, and Cover. Remove any clothing or jewellery from the burnt area, apply cool running water for at least 20 minutes and then cover the burn with a clean cloth (15). Seek medical attention for any burn that blisters, is bigger than a 20 cent piece or is of concern (16).

The Injury Control Council of Western Australia

The Injury Control Council of Western Australia (ICCWA) is a not-for-profit agency leading the way in preventing injury and supporting recovery. ICCWA believes injuries and violence don't just occur by chance; they can be predicted and prevented through evidence based programs and services. ICCWA's vision is to work towards an injury-free community with a mission to support all Western Australians, adults and children, to live a life uninterrupted by injury.

Know Injury

Know Injury provides knowledge, training, resources, and networking opportunities needed to prevent injuries in Western Australia. To do this, Know Injury works with Local Governments, health workers, not-for-profit and community organisations to Know, Learn and Connect:

- **Know** about when, where, why and to whom injuries occur
- **Learn** how to adopt a public health approach to preventing injuries
- **Connect** with other people and organisations working to prevent injuries in Western Australia

Know Injury was established in 2014, is delivered by ICCWA, and is funded by the Department of Health, Western Australia.

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