

## **Scalds – Continues to be a Leading Concern in North America**

*January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009*

Sarah and Tom sit in one of the rooms in the ER with tears streaming down their faces. They have been there for only 30 minutes, but it seems like an eternity as they try and comfort their little girl, Christine. Sarah was in the kitchen cooking and had only turned her back for a second. That second was long enough for 15-month-old Christine to reach up and pull the pot of boiling water down from the stove.

Sarah is having difficulty holding Christine since the burns are on Christine's chest, neck and arms. Christine cries every time the burned areas come into contact with anything and she is in so much pain even after her dose of pain medicine. The nurse and doctor come into the room with another dose of pain medicine. Christine squints shut her big brown eyes and cries as she receives a second dose in her thigh. The doctor explains that this second dose should be enough that they will soon be able to clean the burned areas of skin.

Sarah is barely able to hear the words that the doctor is saying as she tries to comfort Christine and the accident continues to replay in her head. She is able to hear bits and pieces as the doctor explains that they will remove the dead skin, wash the area, apply some cream and then bandage everything. The doctor is trying to explain that Sarah and Tom will have to watch as they will need to do the dressing twice a day at home. Sarah keeps thinking if only she had placed the pot on the back burner, none of this would have happened.

Tom asks the doctor if there will be any scarring. The doctor's response is if there is scarring it will be minimal as the burns are not that deep. The second dose of pain medicine is starting to work and Christine softly snores. The nurse has gathered all the supplies. As the doctor starts to clean the burned areas, Christine awakens and softly cries. The tears begin to roll down Sarah and Tom's faces once again as they must watch and learn how to care for Christine's injuries all the while knowing that she is hurting.

Christine is one of the lucky ones. Each year there are approximately 25,000 burn injuries resulting from scalds. Scald injuries are very painful and require prolonged treatment. Patients sometimes require admission to the hospital, surgical procedures, and/or rehabilitation. Scald injuries can even result in death.

Majority of scald injuries are related to hot tap water and cooking accidents. These are injuries where we have the most control, as they are completely preventable.

### About the ABA

The American Burn Association and its members dedicate their efforts and resources to promoting and supporting burn-related research, education, care, rehabilitation, and prevention. The ABA has more than 3,500 members in the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and Latin America. Members include physicians, nurses, occupational and physical therapists, researchers, social workers, fire fighters, and hospitals with burn centers. Our multidisciplinary membership enhances our ability to work toward common goals with other organizations on educational/prevention programs.

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Please note the details of this story are based on situations that happen on a regular basis. The characters are fictional.