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## Uncommon burns on the rise

Treadmills and instant noodles are the unlikely culprits behind a rise in serious burn injuries to local children, according to staff at the Fairfield Hospital paediatric burns treatment centre.

Fairfield Hospital Staff Specialist Paediatrician Dr Nicholas Cheng issued a warning to parents to be vigilant about protecting children from these types of burns, after seeing an increase in recent years.

“We are leading busier lives and many people now have home treadmills. Children explore with their hands so unfortunately we see lots of children with treadmill burns to the hands, which can be quite severe,” said Dr Cheng.

“Noodle burns are also becoming common. We see these in older children who are trying to help out by preparing their own instant noodles, but then spill them,” he said.

Fairfield teenager Daiquari Goddon learnt first-hand about the dangers of instant noodles.

“She made a bowl of noodles and took them to eat on her bed. She sat on the bed and needless to say her foot copped all the hot water,” said Daiquari’s mum Debbie Goddon.

Centre Clinical Nurse Consultant Wayne Phillips said luckily Daiquari knew to get her foot straight under cold running water.

“Eight days after the injury we can see it’s going to heal fine and a large part of that is because the correct first aid was applied. The cold water stopped the burn penetrating deeper,” Mr Phillips said.

Mr Phillips said only 30 per cent of patients undertook the correct first aid after a burn.

“We’ve found certain cultural beliefs about burns first aid are very common in Fairfield. We’ve seen the use of toothpaste amongst Vietnamese patients, soy sauce amongst Chinese patients and butter amongst Spanish patients,” he said.

“People also mistakenly apply ice, cold water from the fridge or creams and lotions.

“All of these things can unfortunately cause more harm and cold running water is by far the best treatment,” he said.

Data from Sydney Children’s Hospital Network shows that about 1000 children suffer burn injuries in NSW every year.

Fairfield Hospital’s paediatric burns treatment centre treats minor burns and works in partnership with the Children’s Hospital at Westmead to ensure major burns are treated in the best area.

Families living in the Fairfield, Liverpool and Bankstown can access this service through their local emergency department.

June is National Burns Awareness Month. For more safety tips and burn information visit:

<http://www.burnstrust.com.au/prevention/national-burns-awareness-month>

<https://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/fact-sheets/burns-care-advice>

<http://www.kidsafensw.org/home-community/burns-and-scalds-prevention/>

Dr Cheng's tips for burn prevention and treatment:

- Keep children away from cooking areas whenever possible.
- If a burn occurs remove clothing covering the area.
- Run cool water directly from a household tap over the burn area for 20 minutes to reduce the severity of the burn and reduce pain.
- Wrap the burn in wet cloth and seek medical advice.
- If the burn area is bigger than a 50 cent piece or looks deep and white, take the child to your local emergency department.