Association of British Paediatric Nurses
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Committed to promoting the development of children's nursing through evidence based information about practice and education

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ABPN marks National Burns Awareness Day

The Association of British Paediatric Nurses (ABPN) is proud to support National Burns Awareness Day taking place on Wednesday 14th October 2026, joining families, healthcare professionals, and organisations across the UK.

Coordinated by British Burn Association[1] and Children's Burns Trust[2], the purpose is to raise awareness about burn and scald prevention, highlight common household hazards, and promote the correct first-aid practices. The theme for National Burn Awareness Day 2026 is *"One Spark Can Change a Child's Life",* concentrating on the increase in burns to children alongside the dangers of fireworks.

For children's nurses, the day is an important opportunity to reflect on the role that compassionate, individualised care plays when a baby, child or young person experiences a burn, and on the lasting impact that healthcare professionals can have on families during and following the event.

A burn is an injury caused by exposure to thermal (heat), electrical, chemical, or radiation energy[3]. It usually affects the skin but may also affect the airways, lungs, muscles, bones, or other internal organs. Burns are the fourth most common type of trauma worldwide[4]. In 2025, 10,341 children were burned or scalded[5] and most commonly due to hot drinks, hobs and pans, hair straighteners, hot water bottles, and fireworks. 30 babies and toddlers go to hospital with a hot drink burn every day[6]. Over 550 children under 16 years are taken to A&E in the four weeks surrounding bonfire night[7]. A sparkler can reach temperatures of 20 times the boiling point of water. The

1 British Burn Association (2026) https://www.britishburnassociation.org

2 Children's Burns Trust (2026) National Burn Awareness Day Toolkit https://www.britishburnassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/national-burn-awareness-day-toolkit-2026.pdf

3 NICE (2026) Clinical Knowledge Summaries https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/burns-scalds

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5 Children's Burns Trust (2026) National Burn Awareness Day Toolkit https://www.britishburnassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/national-burn-awareness-day-toolkit-2026.pdf

6 Children's Burns Trust (2026) National Burn Awareness Day Toolkit https://www.britishburnassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/national-burn-awareness-day-toolkit-2026.pdf

7 Children's Burns Trust (2026) National Burn Awareness Day Toolkit https://www.britishburnassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/national-burn-awareness-day-toolkit-2026.pdf

strong advice is to only attend organised Firework displays and never give sparklers to children under the age of five.

Early management and first-aid treatment of burns, whatever the cause, is vital. For any healthcare practitioner in any healthcare setting, gaining a detailed history is crucial to establish the timing, the exact cause of the injury, assessing observations and for complications, and documenting the location and size of burn. Consideration of the possibility of non-accidental injury should remain high given the prevalence is 5-15% of all children presenting with burns[8]. Escalation is crucial where there are concerns.

The ABPN encourages children's nurses to use National Burns Awareness Day as an opportunity to reflect on burns management within their own areas of practice, including how families are supported, how siblings are included, and how staff are prepared and supported to care for families experiencing burns or scalds. The physical, psychological, emotional impact of a burn can have long-lasting effects on the child, young person and their families and children's nurses have an essential role to play. Equally vital, the ABPN encourages children's nurses to refresh their own first-aid practice and knowledge, particularly if they will be attending firework events.

Essential Burn First Aid (The 3 C's: Cool, Call, Cover)

- **Cool:** Cool the burn with running cold tap water for 20 minutes. **Do not** use ice, iced water, or greasy substances like butter or toothpaste.
- **Remove:** Gently remove any clothing or jewellery near the burnt area, but **do not** pull anything that is stuck tightly to the skin.
- **Cover:** Cover the burn loosely with a clean layer of cling film or a sterile, non-fluffy dressing to protect against infection.
- **Call:** Call for emergency medical help (999 in the UK) for large, deep burns, chemical/electrical burns, or any burns on the face, hands, or feet.

> "A burn injury is for life[9,10]. A burn can have profound and long-lasting impact on the child or young person, parents, siblings and wider social network. Children's nurses are primely placed to undertake prompt action, and support the baby, child, and young person, and their families, caregivers, and siblings, in each situation with compassion and dignity regardless of the cause of the burn injury."
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> Ellie Forbes – ABPN Honorary Secretary, Member, and Children's Nurse

8 Dolan, D., Arkoulis, N., Gray, A.C., McGill, D., Tollan, C., Reekie, T., Ramsay, S., and Tannock, J. (2025) Do paediatric patients with suspected non-accidental burn injuries have worse clinical outcomes? A 5 -year retrospective review from a UK burns centre. Burns. Volume 51,(5), 107467

9 British Burn Association (2026) https://www.britishburnassociation.org

10 Children's Burns Trust (2026) National Burn Awareness Day Toolkit https://www.britishburnassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/national-burn-awareness-day-toolkit-2026.pdf