

Disturbing New Trends in Childhood Burns

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Burn centers are seeing an unsettling increase in gas fireplace and treadmill burns.

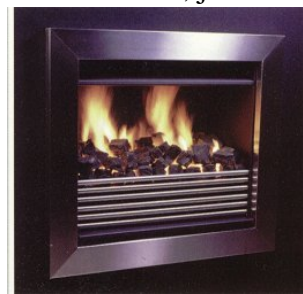
Treadmills and Children: Home exercise machines can be great for your health, but a real danger to children. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 8,700 children under age 5 are injured by home equipment each year; 2,000 of those are from treadmills. Many of these children are hurt playing by moving treadmills when their hands get caught in the back of the machine, where the tread wraps around the roller. The motorized belts don't necessarily stop when the child is caught, making the injury even more severe. Children are naturally curious. 50% of injuries occur while the adult was using the equipment and 33% occurred when the child was unsupervised.

Prevention is the key.

The Regions Burn Center recommends:

- Do not use treadmills with toddlers nearby.
- Do not face treadmills towards the wall.
- Have childproofed on/off switches or programmable lockout codes.
- Install a warning alarm if object nears belt return
- The most important thing you can do to prevent injury is unplug the treadmill and use plug protectors. Hide the kill switch key elsewhere.

Gas Fireplaces and Children: Many parents do not realize the burn potential that glass-enclosed fireplaces pose. There is no flickering, exposed flames to send a warning signal of "HOT!" to curious outstretched fingers. Whether the child lost their balance, just



touched the surface or it was an incidental contact by just walking by, the temperatures of the glass can range up to 392 degrees in 6.5 minutes to 473 degrees in 14 minutes of use.

Recommendations include:

- Install mechanical guards to create a barrier in front of the glass.
- Apply strict warning labels to units and ignition switches.
- Distribute burn prevention information with owner's manual.
- Don't use them until the kids are asleep.

Other ways to decrease the chance of burns to children in the home are:

- Keep your water temperature at 120 degrees or less.
- Keep matches and lighters *locked up*.
- Prevent cords dangling from appliances. A child can tug on a cord and pull something hot down on top of them. Never let a child chew on an appliance cord.
- Always turn the handles of pots and pans inward from the edge of the stove, so little hands cannot reach.

Your effort can make the *difference*.