

Shocking!

Preventing electric shock

From computers to hair dryers, we use electrical appliances all the time. But with electricity comes the risk of electric shock, where electric current passes through your body. This can cause burns or even heart failure and death. Make sure all electrical appliances are in good working order and not damaged. Never touch anyone who has just had an electric shock – you could, in turn, get a shock from them!



Some potential dangers:

Plugs and sockets - Be careful when putting plugs in or pulling them out of sockets – never pull on the cord. Hold the plastic plug firmly and keep your fingers away from the metal pins. Ideally, use only one plug in a socket at a time. Overloading sockets can cause an electrical fault which, in turn, can cause fires.

Cables and wires - Check that cables are in good condition. Make sure they aren't damaged or melted and check that the coloured wires inside aren't showing. Store cables neatly, not stretched out where they could be tripped over or trodden on.



Electrical devices - Keep them unplugged if you're not using them (unless they're designed to stay on – like fridges). Always unplug them if you're going to clean them. If you smell burning, stop using the device straight away and unplug it.

Overhead cables - Be careful of overhead electrical cables. Keep away from them if you're flying a kite or carrying a ladder.

Note: Electrical appliances can also be a fire hazard. See the fact sheet 'Burning Up' for information about electrical fires.

Case Study: Electricity and water

Electricity and liquid is a deadly combination.

Water makes the skin more conductive of electrical current and increases the risk of electric shock.

It's important to:

- keep electrical devices well away from water (e.g. don't take hair dryers or CD players into the bathroom, where they could get wet)
- keep drinks away from electrical items
- dry your hands thoroughly before touching light switches or electrical devices.

