

SALT & ICE CHALLENGE

Risks to Children & Young People!

The “Salt and Ice Challenge” is an online trend where young people place salt on their skin and press ice on top for as long as possible.

This creates a chemical reaction, rapidly lowering the temperature and causing cryogenic (cold) burns, similar to frostbite.

Children and young people may underestimate the harm as the cold numbs the skin, masking pain until significant damage has occurred.

Risks

Second- or third-degree burns, potential need for skin grafts, lasting scarring, nerve damage, and impact on wellbeing. Peer and online pressure amplify the likelihood of wider uptake.

Recent Cases

ED teams in North East London have already treated children for significant burns linked to this challenge. Similar surges have been reported nationally and internationally in the past.

Immediate First Aid Advice

- Cool the affected area under lukewarm running water for at least 10 minutes.
- Do not apply ice, creams, or fluffy dressings.
- Cover with clean cling film or smooth plastic.
- Seek medical attention for deep, blistered, or extensive burns.

Recommended Actions for Schools, Parents and Carers

- Awareness: Alert staff, parents, and carers to the risks of the Salt & Ice Challenge.
- Education: Reinforce with children and young people that this is not a “harmless game” but can cause serious and lasting harm.
- Safeguarding: Be alert to children presenting with unexplained burn injuries and consider safeguarding risks.

Communication suggestions:

Use assemblies, PSHE lessons, and parent newsletters to share simple prevention messages.

Key Messages for Young People

- “The Salt & Ice Challenge can leave permanent scars—don’t risk it.”
- “Cold burns damage tissue, even if you can’t feel it happening.”
- “Don’t hurt yourself for likes—there are safer ways to have fun online.”

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