

# Auckland burns survivor helps launch national safety campaign

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When Jack Dragicevich was an inquisitive toddler he opened kitchen drawers to climb up and investigate the beeping of a microwave oven - with disastrous results.

Aged nearly 3, he opened the microwave door and pulled a dish of boiling water and vegetables down his front.

Mum Allissa McDowall quickly got Jack under tepid water in the shower to try to limit the damage, but he had suffered third degree burns to 11 per cent of his body and minor burns to his face.

At the time, in 2008, Jack told the *Herald*: "The bowl, it tipped on me" and that the burns were very "owie".



Jack Dragicevich, aged nearly 3, with his mother Allissa McDowall in hospital in 2008, after having operation for his burns. Photo / Getty Images

Today, at the launch of a national campaign at Auckland City Hospital on how to keep children safe in the home, the confident 11-year-old from the North Shore recounted his accident, his treatment, and his work as an ambassador for burns survivors.

He has had a number of major skin grafts, each of which requires him to stay in hospital for weeks at a time. Jack and his mother are pleased with his recovery, but he faces more operations or other types of treatment because, Allissa says, "The skin doesn't grow as fast as you do".

Jack, who plays several sports, including basketball, his favourite, says his skin sometimes feels tight.

"When I'm training for swimming my shoulders don't go fully back."

Jack has a safety message for families: "Keep microwaves high."



Jack Dragicevich, 11, was scalded badly with hot water as a 2-year-old. Photo / Jason Oxenham

The national safety campaign that he helped to launch is an interactive exhibition, the \$150,000 Safekids Safety Whare, which will be at the hospital until Friday and spend next year visiting 10 sites around New Zealand.