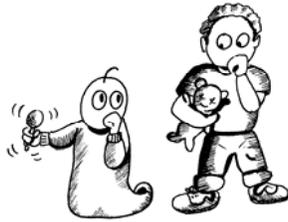


INJURY PREVENTION



for Infants, Toddlers & Preschoolers

Accidental injuries are a leading cause of hospitalization and death for young children. Because many childhood injuries happen in or around the home, it is the parents who must assume responsibility for making the home a safe place.

Injury prevention, like parenting, is an ongoing process. Sometimes, it seems, the job is never done. Parents must constantly be on the lookout for potential dangers in and around the home.

Children are at risk for injury from the moment they are born. Therefore, injury prevention strategies must be implemented even before newborns come home from the hospital. As children grow, they

become more mobile. With this mobility comes a greater risk for injury. The more ground children can cover, the more potential dangers they will come into contact with. It is especially important, therefore, for the parents of children who can crawl, toddle, walk, and run to pay close attention to injury prevention.

The Major Causes of Injury

- *Falls**
- *Suffocation or Choking**
- *Poisoning**
- *Scalds and Burns**
- *Motor Vehicle Accidents**

Injury Prevention Strategies

Falls

***Never leave infants or toddlers on a raised surface, such as a changing table or a counter top, unattended.** Even if parents turn their backs for only a second, that is enough time for children to roll over and fall to the floor.

***Change children's diapers on a crib instead of a changing table.** This way, if parents have to leave their children for a minute, they can

protect their children from falling simply by pulling up the crib side.

***Always pull the crib side all the way up when children are in the crib.** This way, children won't be able to climb out.

***Don't leave large stuffed animals in children's cribs or playpens.** Children will quickly learn to use such toys to stand on to get out.

***When using infant seats, always strap children into them.**

***Never leave infant seats on narrow raised surfaces such as a chair or a counter top.** Sudden movements by infants can easily cause the seat (with baby in it) to fall.

***Don't allow children to stand on high chairs or regular chairs.** They can easily fall.

***Lock all windows or screens, or install safety stops so they will only open a few inches.**

***Don't allow children to sit on counter tops.**

***Don't allow children to play on balconies unsupervised.**

***Use safety gates at the top and bottom of all stairways in the home.** Don't rely on doors. Eventually one will be left open.

***Provide rubber soled, canvas shoes when children start walking.** Stiff leather shoes are hard to walk in and may cause more frequent falls.

***Discourage running in the house, especially in rooms that have a lot of furniture.**

***Cover all sharp furniture edges with corner guards and edge covers.**

***Make sure all play areas are free of falling hazards such as deep holes, glass, and rusty and/or sharp objects.**

Suffocation or Choking

***Do not cover mattresses or pillows with plastic.**

***Tie knots in plastic bags before throwing them away.**

***Store all plastic bags (garbage bags, sandwich bags, grocery bags) out of reach.**

***Use baby powder cautiously.** It can be dangerous if large amounts are inhaled.

***After meals, remove bibs before taking children out of their high chairs.**

***Never pin or tie pacifiers to children.** The strings can easily wrap around children's necks.

***Fasten the restraining straps on children's high chairs close to the body.**

***Make sure crib mattresses fit tightly in the crib.** If the mattress is too small, children are at risk for getting their heads, legs, or arms stuck between the mattress and the side of the crib.

***Make sure all mobiles are hung beyond children's reach.**

***Never prop bottles or pacifiers in children's mouths.**

***Make sure all sheets and bedcovers are loose so children cannot get stuck underneath them.**

***Be wary of certain finger foods, especially for children under five years of age.** Foods that are most frequently a choking hazard are **nuts and popcorn.** **Grapes, hot dogs, hard candy and carrots** can also be dangerous. Make sure they are cut into very small pieces before children attempt to eat them.

***Use balloons with extreme caution.** They are especially dangerous if swallowed.

***Never leave infants or toddlers unsupervised near water.** This includes bath tubs, wading pools, and swimming pools. A good rule to follow with infants in the bathtub is to keep one hand on them at all times. Keep bathroom doors shut at all times, and make sure the lids to all toilets are down when not in use.

***Keep the doors to all household appliances shut at all times.**

***If there is an unused refrigerator or freezer in or around the house, remove the door, or lock it shut.**

***As soon as children are old enough to crawl, make sure the floor of the home and any area that is within children's reach is free of small objects that can fit into children's mouths.** Since young children do a lot of exploring with their mouths, they are at risk of choking on small objects that can become lodged in their throats. Frequent vacuuming or sweeping will limit the risk. Also make sure that all toys are free of small parts that can be pulled off and swallowed. Check clothing frequently for loose buttons and fasteners.

***Take an infant/child CPR course.** The knowledge gained will be invaluable if a life threatening situation, such as a choking or a loss of consciousness, should arise.

Poisoning

***Keep all toxic materials, including household cleaners, medications, and chemicals out of the reach of children in cabinets that are locked or that have childproof latches.**

***Throw out all medication, household cleaners, and other toxic substances that have not**

been used in the last year. The fewer poisonous substances there are in your house, the less the risk for accidental poisoning.

***Lock up all medications.** Unfortunately, children sometimes figure out how to open bottles that have childproof caps.

***Avoid carrying medications in purses or briefcases.** Children love to go through them and may mistake the medication for candy.

***When giving medication to a child, avoid calling it candy or making a game of it.**

***Make sure that all medications and chemicals in the home are correctly labeled.** Parents will need to know exactly what their children have swallowed in the event of a poisoning.

***Try to store all nonedible substances in a place other than the kitchen.**

***Never store chemicals or cleaners in food containers.**

***Teach children to recognize and to avoid dangerous products.**

***Rinse empty chemical containers before throwing them away.** Make sure they are discarded in a place where they cannot be retrieved by children.

***Use insect and rodent poisons very carefully.** Make sure they are placed only in areas where children cannot find them.

***Treat alcoholic beverages as poisons.** Lock them up out of the reach of children.

***Make sure that all paint in the home is lead free.** Paint manufactured before 1976 contains lead. If there is any sanding and stripping of old paint going on in the home, remove children from the premises. Exposure to even paint dust can cause lead poisoning.

***Many house plants are poisonous.** Keep them out of the reach of children.

***Keep the telephone number of the local poison control center on or near the telephone.**

***Make sure a bottle of syrup of ipecac is in the home at all times to induce vomiting.** NEVER use it

unless instructed to do so by a physician or poison control center.

Scalds and Burns

***Use fire resistant clothing for infants.** Wash them according to the manufacturer's instructions.

***Always feel car seats before putting children into them.** They can become very hot from the sun.

***Keep children away from all hot appliances, including stoves, light bulbs, toasters, portable heaters, grills, irons, and curling irons.**

***Do not leave cups of hot liquid (coffee, tea, soup) within the reach of children.** Never carry children while pouring or carrying a cup of hot liquid.

***Turn down the water heater in your home to 120 degrees to prevent burns in the bathtub or at the faucet.** Always check the temperature of bath water before bathing children.

***When children begin to understand words, teach them the meaning of "hot."**

***Use safety plugs or outlet caps on all unused electrical outlets in the home.**

***Turn all pot handles away from the edge of the stove while cooking.**

***Avoid using tablecloths.** Toddlers often use them to pull themselves up, and if hot food is on the table, it can come down on top of them.

***Make sure the cords to all appliances used in the home do not dangle within the reach of children.**

***Tape extension cords together to prevent children from pulling them apart.**

***Make sure all matches and cigarette lighters are kept out of the reach of children.**

***If there is a fireplace in the home, make sure it is well screened.**

Motor Vehicle Accidents

***Always restrain children in automobile safety seats. Use safety seats until children no longer**

fit in one, and are big enough to use standard adult seat belts (usually about 60 pounds, or five years of age).

The most dangerous place for children to be if there is an auto accident is in the arms of an adult. *Always place children in child safety seats.

***Make sure infants (up to 20 pounds) are placed in safety seats facing rearward instead of forward.** The safest place to place infant safety seats is in the middle of the back seat.

***Always use the required safety harnesses and/or safety shields that come with the child safety seat.**

***Make sure the seat belts and/or harnesses used to secure children into the safety seats are tight enough.**

***Make sure the seat belt used to anchor the safety seat to the auto seat is in the correct position.**

***Never leave a stroller behind a parked car.**

***Don't allow children to play in driveways.**

***Begin teaching traffic safety as early as possible.**

***Don't allow children to play outdoors unsupervised until they have repeatedly proven that they understand the rules of traffic safety.**



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