

Why



Always Get Hurt

Children are naturally curious about people and objects in the world around them. They spend much of their time exploring and learning. At the same time, their small bodies are growing quickly and becoming more mobile. A child's developing body, however, is less skilled and more prone to injury than an adult's. A child's body proportions are also different from an adult's. For example, a child's head is quite large and heavy compared with the rest of the body. This puts children at greater risk for head injuries. Children's eyesight and hearing take time to fully develop. Thus they are often injured by traffic that they don't hear or see while walking or cycling.

One way infants learn about their world is by putting objects in their mouths. They also grasp and pull with their hands and wiggle and move their bodies. All of these actions can lead them into danger. The infant who can pick up a button or coin can put it in his or her mouth and choke. The infant who can pull a cup from a coffee table can be burned by hot liquid. The infant who can roll over can roll off a bed and suffer a head injury. Infants face many new dangers as they learn to roll, crawl, stand, climb, and walk. Infants cannot recognize dangers and it is up to adults to protect them. Often, protecting them is as simple as removing the dangers. A bottle of furniture polish stored

under a kitchen sink could poison a curious crawler. The danger can easily be removed by storing the polish in a locked cabinet where the child cannot reach it.

Like infants, toddlers and older children are always exploring and trying new things. Because they can walk, they tend to get into more trouble than infants do. They learn to copy adult behaviors and begin to understand how things work. They use words to ask for things and talk to other people, yet they lack judgment and understanding of potential risks. For instance, children cannot judge the depth of water.

Children are often injured when they are left alone, even for a few minutes. Young children need constant adult guidance and supervision, but the amount and kind of supervision needed changes as children grow and develop.

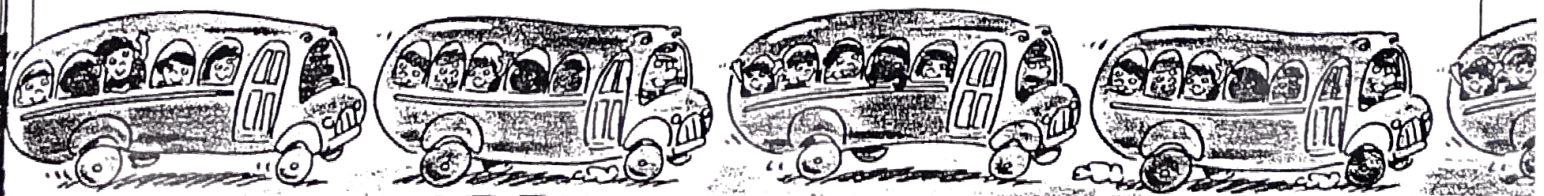
You can teach children safety in two ways. First, you can set an example of safe behavior by acting safely yourself. Second, you can encourage

children to act safely by giving them simple, clear instructions about what they should and should not do. For example, teach children to always buckle their safety belts. Explain to them how a safety belt protects them from getting hurt. Teach them that they should not touch a hot stove and explain the meaning of the word *hot*. Remember to be patient. It takes time to learn safe behaviors and make them a habit.

For more information on keeping children safe, contact:

Consumer Product Safety Commission
Washington, DC 20207
(800) 638-CPSC
Evaluates the safety of products sold to the public. Provides printed materials on consumer product safety topics on request.

National Maternal and Child Health Clearinghouse
8201 Greensboro Drive, Suite 600
McLean, VA 22102
(703) 821-8955, ext. 254
Provides information and printed materials on maternal and child health.



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Infant and Child Choking Hazards

Children in their first three years of life are at greatest risk for choking, suffocation, and other airway obstructions. Every year, 300 children die from choking on food and other small objects found around the house, making it the most common cause of accidental death in children under the age of one. As a childcare provider, follow these tips for preventing infant and child choking hazards.

I. Be aware of small objects such as:

#1: LATEX BALLOONS PEN CAPS COINS PAPER CLIPS
EARINGS/RINGS SCREWS BUTTONS MARBLES
BUTTON SIZE BATTERIES

II. Play it safe with toys: *Any toy with small, removable parts is a choking hazard for children.*

1. Make sure the toy is age appropriate for your child.
2. Check the package for any warning labels.
3. Keep older children's toys separate.

*** ANY TOY THAT CAN FIT THROUGH A 1 3/4 INCH DIAMETER TOILET PAPER TUBE MAY BE CONSIDERED UNSAFE FOR SMALL CHILDREN!**

Common Choking Foods:

Hot Dogs: the skin holds the meat together, making it more likely to be swallowed whole. Do not feed to a child under 3. For older children, remove the skin and cut lengthwise and crosswise into very tiny pieces.

Raw Carrots: are too hard for children under 2 to chew. The pieces can easily get stuck in the airway. For children 3 and up, cook the carrots until they are mushy.

Grapes: can be accidentally swallowed whole. For children under 4, serve grapes without the skin and cut into small pieces.

Nuts, Raisins, and Hard Candy: can be easily inhaled into the airway. Do not serve to children under 6.

Popcorn: the unpopped kernels can present a choking hazard. For children over 4, remove all unpopped kernels.

Peanut Butter: big clumps can get stuck in the airway. For children over 4, serve on bread not by the spoonful.

Home Safety Checklist for Families with Young Children

This safety checklist is designed to help you protect your children-and everyone else in the family-from unintentional injuries. It is designed to be an easy, room-by-room survey that will quickly point out possible dangers. When you find a hazardous situation, change it-now!

Of course, no checklist will identify all the possible dangers, so use this process to look for other hazards. After you have read through the listed items for a room, take a few minutes to look at the room from the viewpoint of a child.

- Get down at toddler level and survey the room.
- Remember that anything that fits in a child's mouth will probably be put in.
- Look for climbing opportunities and things that can be pulled down from above.
- Watch for sharp corners, protrusions, and objects a child might fall upon.
- And keep in mind whatever special talents your children have shown-from prying off air vent covers to spotting loose carpet tacks.

If you answer "no" to any item in the following checklist, you have found a dangerous situation that you should change.

KITCHEN

- ___ Are there safety latches on cabinet doors?
- ___ Are cleaning supplies stored:
 - *separately from foods?*
 - *in a locked cabinet out of reach of your child?*
 - *in their original containers?*
- ___ Are vitamins and medicine out of your child's reach?
- ___ Are food treats and other attractive items stored away from the stove?

- ___ Are these dangerous objects out of reach:
 - knives and other sharp objects?
 - hot food, beverages, and glassware?
 - serrated boxes of plastic wrap and aluminum foil?
- ___ Is the table cloth folded or secured so it can't be pulled down?
- ___ Do you keep hot food and beverages out of the hands of adults who are holding children?
- ___ Do you keep pot handles turned away from the stove, so children can't reach them?
- ___ Do you test the temperature of foods (especially microwaved foods) before serving them to your child?
- ___ Do you keep your child in a safe place while cooking?
- ___ Do you keep toys and play activities out of the kitchen?
- ___ Does your child's high-chair have a wide base and a harness?
- ___ Do you avoid serving your child peanuts, grapes, hot dogs, popcorn, and carrots?
- ___ Are matches and lighters kept high up, out of your child's reach?

BATHROOM

- ___ Are medicines and cleaning supplies stored:
 - *in a locked cabinet?*
 - *out of your child's reach?*
 - *in clearly marked and original containers?*
 - *in containers with child-resistant caps?*
- ___ Are razors, scissors, and other sharp utensils stored out of your child's reach?
- ___ Are electric appliances:
 - *unplugged when not in use?*
 - *positioned away from all water?*
 - *out of your child's reach?*
- ___ Is there a lock on the toilet seat?

- ___ While in the bathtub:
 - ___ Is there protective padding on the faucet in the bathtub?
 - ___ Is there a non-skid mat in the bathtub?
 - ___ Is your water heater turned down to 120 degrees Fahrenheit?
 - ___ Do you check the temperature of the water in the tub before you put your child into it?
 - ___ Have you installed anti-scald devices in your tub spout and shower head?

Your Child's Bedroom

- ___ Does your child's crib have:
 - *slats that are no more than 2 3/8 inches (6 cm.) apart?*
 - *a mattress that fits snugly against the frame (no more than two finger-widths between slats and mattress)?*
 - *sides that are 22 inches (56 cm.) above the mattress?*
 - *secure, child-proof side locks?*
- ___ Have you made sure that the crib has:
 - *no sharp corners or edges and no projections, such as posts?*
 - *no broken, cracked, or loose parts?*
 - *no loose plastic sheeting?*
 - *no cords or drapery in the crib?*
 - *no low cradle gyms or mobiles that the child can use to crawl out?*
 - *no objects that could help your child out such as a hamper, pillows or stuffed animals, which should be removed once the child can stand?*
- ___ Have you placed the crib at least one foot from walls, furniture, radiators, heating vents, and windows?
- ___ Does the changing table have straps to prevent falls?

Does your child wear flame-retardant clothing?

PLAY AREAS

Does the toy chest have no lid, a lightweight lid, or a safe-closing mechanism?

Are the toys appropriate for your child? Are they:

- *without small pieces that can break off to be choked on?*
- *without sharp corners or edges?*
- *without any joints that can pinch fingers?*
- *without any projections that could injure an eye?*
- *of appropriate size and weight for your child?*
- *painted with non-toxic paint?*
- *with play value for your child, so they don't become objects of destructive experiments?*

Do you routinely inspect and dispose of damaged or unsafe toys?

WINDOWS

Is access to windows blocked so that your child can't fall out?

Do windows have safety bars (except windows leading to fire escapes)?

STAIRS & RAILINGS

Are there safety gates (not the accordion type) at the top and bottom of all stairways?

Is there firm footing on the stairs (no loose carpeting, uneven steps)?

Are the stairs well lighted?

Are the protective walls and railings on stairs, porches, and balconies sturdy and in good repair?

ELECTRICAL OUTLETS AND FIXTURES

Do all electrical switches and outlets have cover plates?

Do all unused outlets have no-shock, child-proof covers?

Are electrical cords:

- *out of your child's reach and out of traffic flow?*
- *neither frayed nor cracked?*
- *neither under rugs nor stapled to baseboards?*

Is the use of extension cords kept to a minimum, and are the unused outlets on the cord covered?

Does every light fixture:

- *have a lightbulb in it?*
- *have a light bulb of appropriate size and wattage?*

If you use fuses, are they the correct sizes for your circuits?

Are space heaters:

- *properly grounded and connected directly to an outlet?*
- *stable and protectively covered?*
- *inaccessible to your child? at least 36 inches from curtains, towels, carpets, papers, and furniture?*
- *used according to manufacturer's instructions and local fire ordinances?*

GENERAL LIVING AREAS

Are dangerous items out of reach:

- *plants (poison danger)?*
- *cigarettes and butts (poison danger)?*
- *loose change (choking danger)?*

- *purse and pocketbook contents (poison and choking dangers)?*
- *balloons?*
- *matches and lighters?*

Are small rugs and runners tacked down or slip resistant?

Are high-traffic areas well lighted and free of obstructions?

Have you checked to make sure there are no loose paint chips around the house?

Are guns stored unloaded in locked cases and drawers and the ammunition stored separately?

Is there at least one working smoke detector on each floor, and is there one in the hallway by the bedrooms?

Are the smoke detectors checked and cleaned regularly?

Are the batteries changed once each year?

Do you have a home fire escape plan?

- *Does it have two exit routes?*
- *Do you have a designated meeting place?*
- *Do you practice it in the dark, on your hands and knees?*
- *Do you turn on the smoke detector's alarm for your child to hear?*

Does your child know how to "stop, drop, and roll" to put out clothing that is on fire?

Is there a working fire extinguisher to handle small fires, especially in the kitchen?

Do you have your chimney inspected and cleaned every year?

Are there screens or safety rails on any fire places, wood-burning stoves, or heaters?

Are emergency numbers posted by the phone:

- *family physician?*
- *poison control center?*
- *ambulance?*
- *police?*

BASEMENTS & GARAGES

- ___ Do child-proof latches control access to the basement and garage?
- ___ Are volatile liquids, such as cleaning solvents, tightly capped and away from the furnace, hot water heater, and other ignition sources?
- ___ Are you sure that no gasoline is stored in the basement or your garage, if it is attached to your house?
- ___ Do power tools have guards in place and are they unplugged when not in use?

OUTDOOR PLAY AREAS

- ___ Do you supervise your child's outdoor play?
- ___ Does your child's play area:
 - *have an impact-absorbent surface like pea gravel or wood chips?*
 - *have a fence around it?*
- ___ Do you regularly check the play area and remove poisonous plants and berries?
- ___ Is the play equipment:
 - *securely anchored?*
 - *at least six feet from fences or other structures?*
 - *free of projections, sharp edges, loose parts, entrapment spaces, hard swings, and moving parts?*
 - *surrounded by a soft landing space?*
- ___ Do swimming pools have:
 - *fences on all four sides that are at least five feet high?*
 - *gates that are self-latching and self-closing?*

EMERGENCIES

- ___ In a medical emergency remain calm
 - ___ DO NOT hang up the telephone until you are told to do so by the emergency operator.
 - ___ If you get a recorded message
 - *stay on the line*
 - *follow instructions given*
- Add to this checklist any hazards you spotted that were not listed:

Now that you have a complete list of the dangers in your home, your next step should be to eliminate these dangers.



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