

Home Safety

To help ensure your home is a safe place for your child, please review the following guidelines.

Bedroom Dangers

1. The changing table can be a dangerous place for an unattended child. Always use the safety belt and keep a hand on your child at all times.
2. Baby powder should be kept out of reach of children. Avoid using it around your baby's face because talc or cornstarch in the powder can injure a baby's lungs.
3. All window coverings ideally should be cordless but if you do have drapery or blind cords make sure these are tied up without loops so your child can't reach. Loose cords can strangle a child.
4. Babies should sleep on their backs until the age of 1 year to decrease the risk of sudden infant death syndrome. The crib should be free of clutter (no stuffed toys, pillows, quilts, comforters or anything that could cover their face). The mattress should be firm, covered with a tight crib sheet, and fit snugly in the frame. The slats should be no wider than 2 3/8 inches. Make sure the head and foot board does not have any cut outs that your child may become trapped. The crib must be correctly assembled with all hardware tightened securely. Nothing with strings or ribbons should be hung over the crib.
5. Make sure night lights are away from drapes or bedding to avoid starting a fire. You should buy only "cool" nightlights.
6. Make sure all outlets in the home are covered with plug protectors.
7. Make sure window guards are secure to prevent a fall from the window.
8. Depending on the size of your home you will probably have multiple smoke alarms. Make sure there are alarms outside of every bedroom or any place where people sleep. Batteries should be changed yearly and tested monthly to make sure the alarm still works.
9. The best type of toy chest is a box or a basket without a lid. If you have a chest make sure the hinges hold the lid open, the chest is non-locking, and has air holes in case your child gets trapped inside. Any furniture that a child could pull down on top of their body should be secured to the wall to prevent this.
10. If you have a humidifier it should be cool mist to prevent burns and should be kept clean to avoid bacteria or mold growth

Kitchen Dangers

1. Any sharp objects, hazardous materials, or anything that could be harmful to your child if ingested or handled (cleaning supplies, dishwashing detergent, vitamins, medicine, matches, lighters, etc.) should be kept in drawer or cabinet with child safety locks.
2. Keep stools or chairs away from counters. Use back burners and point pot handles toward the back of the stove. Keep your child away from the stove when it is on. All appliances should be out of reach of your child and unplugged when not in use. Appliance cords should also be kept out of your child's reach.
3. Make sure your dishwasher and stove have a childproof lock. Make sure knob protectors have been placed on stove knobs.
4. Make sure your child's high chair has a safety belt with a strap between the legs.
5. Keep a working fire extinguisher on hand at all times and know how to use it.

Bathroom Dangers

1. Since there are many potential hazards in the bathroom keep the door closed with a childproof doorknob cover to keep your child out when not with you. Keep the toilet lid down and consider a lock for the lid.
2. Always stay within arm's reach of your child when he is in the bathtub. A child can drown in even a few inches of water. You should also make sure the bathmat is non-skid and the tub has nonskid strips to prevent falls.
3. Just like in the kitchen keep all medications, cleaners, toiletries, or any potentially hazardous items in a childproof locked cabinet. Make sure all medications have child resistant caps. Make sure all electrical appliances are unplugged and out of reach. Outlets should have ground fault interrupters (GFIs).
4. The hottest temperature at the faucet should be no more than 120°F to avoid burns. Usually you can adjust your hot water heater.

Other General Home Dangers

1. Make sure all furniture and any other heavy items like a TV or lamp are secure so they can't fall on your child.
2. Some houseplants are poisonous so keep out of reach of children. Teach your child to never pick and eat anything from an indoor or outdoor plant.
3. Make sure any sharp edges on tables, fireplace, etc. are padded.
4. Make sure all electrical outlets are covered with a childproof cover. There should be no frayed, worn, or damaged electrical cords and outlets should never be overloaded. Cords should also be kept out of reach of children. Run them behind furniture and don't let them hang down for children to grab.
5. All fireplaces should be blocked from access and lighters and matches kept in a locked cabinet. Only use candles when an adult is present. Candles should never be left unattended.
6. Homes without firearms are safest for children, but if you must have a gun make sure it is stored unloaded in a locked safe. Ammunition should be stored locked in a separate area.
7. Make sure your family has a fire escape plan. You should practice home fire drills with the entire family.
8. All stairs should be blocked with a child safety gate.
9. Make sure all areas of your home are free of small parts, small toys, coins, balloons, plastic bags, or anything which may present a choking hazard.
10. Paper shredders should always be unplugged and out of reach of children. Treadmills should also be unplugged and cord concealed from children.
11. Make sure the poison control number is posted by all phones and programmed into your cell phone. Teach your child how to call 911 in an emergency.

Pool and Playground Dangers

1. Home playground equipment should be assembled correctly, on level ground and anchored firmly. The swings should be made of soft material such as plastic, rubber, or canvas. Wood chips, mulch, or shredded rubber should be under the equipment. The recommended depth of the mulch is 9 inches for play equipment up to 7 feet high.
2. Pools should always have at least a 4 foot fence surrounding them and separating them from the house. The fence gate should swing out, self-close and self-latch. The latch should be high and out of reach of children.
3. You should have easy access to rescue equipment such as a shepherd's hook or a life preserver. A phone should also be easily accessible.
4. Learn CPR. Your skills could save your child's life!

