



## Safety Tips & Information Guide

Accidents are the number one health hazard faced by children. Not only are accidents the leading cause of death in children under 15 years old, but also are the leading cause of permanent or temporary disability in children over the age of one year.

To help prevent the likelihood of accidents in and around the home, it is important to first realize that there is no way to eliminate all of the potential hazards faced by children. Rather, by focusing on the most obvious (and known) threats first, parents can help to minimize several of the risks. As time goes on and your baby grows, always pay attention to their surroundings and the hazards associated with them. You will become aware of new hazards, some avoidable, some unavoidable.

Children are continually growing, learning and exploring. This is a vital part of their development and it is crucial to encourage this behavior, but it is also important to realize the “avoidable” risks and safeguard against them whenever possible.

The number one way to help prevent accidents is proper adult supervision. **No safety product can ever be considered a substitute for supervision**, there are too many possibilities for any product to make a child’s world completely safe. Safety products must be considered a deterrent to injury, rather than a solution. When used in combination with proper supervision, these products become a valuable aid in helping to reduce the risk of accidents.

To help parents become aware of some common safety hazards around the home, we have put together a collection of safety tips and information. This is not a complete list of all potential hazards, but is rather a collection of some of the more common and well-known safety risks.

The information contained in this guide is intended to help parents better understand and help reduce the risk of accidents. Following these guidelines do not guarantee against the possibility of accidents, but when followed in combination with proper adult supervision should help minimize the risk of accidents. This guide is not a complete list of all potential hazards.

## Safety Tips and Suggestions

It is important to note that an infant's view of the world is much different from our own and even from a toddler's. It is a good idea to actually get down on your hands and knees and crawl around your home. You'll be amazed at the potential hazards you may find that you would not have noticed standing up. Look under beds and furniture and pay close attention to everything, especially near the floor.

The toddler stage is probably best described as the "age of exploration". It is at this stage that the desire to learn and discover is mixed with rapidly developing mobility. It is important to promote learning and other development through exploration, but it is also a time when hidden dangers can pose a serious injury threat. Pay close attention to their surroundings, noting any newly discovered dangers. This is also a time of learning for adults. Many things around the house may not normally appear to be hazards, but in a toddler's world they just may be.

Here are some safety tips and other information to help make your home a safer place. It is important to note that this is not a complete list of child hazards, but rather a guide to help you better understand how to better identify these hazards.

- **Bedroom & Crib Safety**
  - ❑ Locate the crib away from windows where broken glass and blind cords can pose serious threats.
  - ❑ Keep cribs away from any accessible electrical outlets.
  - ❑ The crib rail should require at least two movements to move it down. This helps prevent small children from opening the rail themselves.
  - ❑ Prevent suffocation or entanglement. Never use a crib sheet unless it fits securely on crib mattress. Make sure the crib sheet overlaps the mattress so it cannot be dislodged by pulling on the corner of the sheet.
  - ❑ Never use an adult sheet on a crib mattress; it can come loose and present an entanglement hazard to young children.
  - ❑ Remove pillows, quilts, comforters, and sheepskins from the crib.
  - ❑ Place a baby on his/her back on a firm, tight-fitting mattress in a crib meeting current safety standards.
  - ❑ Keep pictures and other wall hangings away from cribs so they cannot accidentally fall into the crib.
  - ❑ Hanging toys in the crib can cause children's clothes to become tangled.
  - ❑ Remove mobiles when your baby is 5-7 months old or sooner, if necessary.
  - ❑ Keep bedroom doors closed while sleeping.
  - ❑ Use a monitor to listen for children if they sleep in another room.

- Bathroom Safety

- ❑ Never leave a baby alone in a bathtub for even a second. Always keep the baby in arm's reach. Don't leave a baby in the care of another young child. Never leave to answer the phone, answer the door, to get a towel or for any other reason. If you must leave, take the baby with you.
- ❑ A baby bath seat is not a substitute for supervision. A bath seat is a bathing aid, not a safety device. Babies have slipped or climbed out of bath seats and drowned.
- ❑ Keep the toilet lid down to prevent access to the water. Use a toilet lock to stop young children from opening the lid.
- ❑ Use soft protective covers for tub faucets to help prevent injuries from children falling into the faucets
- ❑ Turn your hot water down to 120° or less to prevent accidental burns.

- Electrical Safety

- ❑ Cover all unused electrical outlets using outlet covers and/ or power strip covers.
- ❑ Insert plugs fully so that no part of the prongs are exposed when the cord is in use.
- ❑ Look for a certification label from an independent testing lab such as UL or ETL on the package or the product itself. Products with this certification label meet current industry safety standards. For extension cords, look for a permanently attached certification label on the cord near the plug. For power strips and surge protectors, inspect the underside of the casing and make certain that it is marked with the manufacturer's name and the testing lab.
- ❑ Use electrical cords, power strips and surge protectors that have polarized plugs with one blade slightly wider the other, or grounded three-pronged plugs. These features reduce the risk of electric shock.
- ❑ Make sure cords do not dangle from the counter or table tops where they can be pulled down or tripped over. These cords can also prevent a strangulation hazard.

- Fire & Fireplace Safety

- ❑ Protect children from fireplaces and woodstoves using a fireplace gate.
- ❑ Always use a screen around the fireplace or wood stove to keep sparks from flying out and to protect children and adults from accidental clothing ignition.
- ❑ Keep flammable materials such as carpets, pillows, furniture or papers away from the fireplace area. Be sure the Christmas tree is not close enough to be ignited by a spark.
- ❑ Open the damper before lighting the fire and **keep it open until the ashes are cool**. This will avert the build-up of poisonous gases, especially while the family is sleeping.
- ❑ Do not overload the fireplace. Large fires can lead to overheating of wall or roof materials, particularly if the fireplace is constructed of metal.
- ❑ Make sure that the fire is out completely before retiring for the night or when leaving the house.
- ❑ Fireplaces, wood stoves and chimneys should be inspected once a year to ensure that they are in proper operating condition.

- Furniture Safety
  - ❑ Protect any sharp furniture edges using furniture edge and corner cushions.
  - ❑ Check all furniture for stability. Use tip-resistant furniture safety brackets to help secure any unstable furniture.
  - ❑ Avoid tables or other furniture with glass tops until children are older.
  - ❑ Hanging cords from telephones, lamps and other items on furniture can pose a strangulation hazard or can trip a running child.
  
- Kitchen Safety
  - ❑ When cooking, turn all pot handles in to prevent a child from pulling the pan off of the stove.
  - ❑ Put hot foods in the center of the table to help prevent children from pulling them off.
  - ❑ Use cabinet and drawer locks to help prevent access to drawers with knives and cabinets with cleaning fluids and other hazardous materials.
  - ❑ Use appliance locks to help restrict access to refrigerators, stoves, dishwashers, etc.
  - ❑ Use safety gates to help keep children out of the kitchen while cooking.
  - ❑ Avoid using tablecloths, as children can pull them causing objects to fall on them.
  
- Poison Prevention
  - ❑ Keep all chemicals and medicines locked up and out of sight.
  - ❑ Use child-resistant packaging properly by closing the container securely after each use. Child-resistant caps are available that fit many household chemical containers that do not have these special caps.
  - ❑ Keep items in original containers and leave the original labels on all products. Read the label before using.
  - ❑ When products are in use, never let young children out of your sight, even if you must take them along when answering the phone or doorbell.
  
- Stairway Safety
  - ❑ Use stairway gates to help prevent children's access to stairways (both top and bottom if necessary). Use a wall-mounted gate instead of pressure mounted in any stairway area for extra security.
  - ❑ Keep stairways clear of any objects, cords or loose rugs that could prevent tripping.
  - ❑ Pay special attention to the area near the top of any stairwell. Are there any objects that could potentially trip a running child? If so, remove them.
  - ❑ Use a banister guard to help prevent children from playing around or becoming entangled in stairway banisters.

- Window and Door Safety

- ❑ Use window guards and window stops to help prevent accidental window falls. Never depend on screens to keep children from falling out of windows. Guards should be installed in children's bedrooms, parents' bedroom, and other rooms where young children spend time.
- ❑ Keep furniture, toys, etc. away from windows, to discourage children from climbing near windows.
- ❑ Keep all window cords out of the reach of children. Use window blind cord wind-up devices to help store loose cords more safely. Cut any cords that form a continuous loop.
- ❑ Use doorstops and finger guards to help prevent finger and hand injuries from doors swinging opened or closed.
- ❑ Use doorknob covers or door locks to help prevent access to closets or other hazardous areas.

- Outdoor Safety

- ❑ Always be sure to apply sunscreen to children. If infants are too young for sunscreen (check with your doctor), be sure to use sunshades for strollers and carriers. Sun protective domes for beaches and other outdoor activities can also provide protection.
- ❑ On decks and balconies, use protective safety netting to prevent accidental falls. Also consider using safety gates on any stairways on decks or balconies.
- ❑ Be sure children wear helmets and other necessary protective gear whenever using bicycles, skateboards, scooters, or playing any sports requiring their use.

- Auto & Travel Safety

- ❑ Make sure that the child is secure in the car seat and that the car seat is securely in place. Use a seatbelt tightener to help take out any slack in the belt.
- ❑ For older children, use a shoulder strap adjuster to help the belt fit small children properly.
- ❑ Never place a child in the front seat of a vehicle with passenger side airbags. The airbag can cause serious injury or death to small children if it is employed.
- ❑ Always be sure that children are securely belted **before** moving the vehicle, even in a parking lot or driveway.

- General Safety Tips

- ❑ Use safety gates, doorknob locks and door locks to help prevent access to any restricted or dangerous areas.
- ❑ Check for all small objects around the house and put them out of reach of children. Small objects present a choking hazard for small children.
- ❑ Keep all plastic bags out of reach of children.
- ❑ Prohibit access to garage and workshop areas with a secure lock. Keep as many tools and other sharp or hazardous objects as possible together in this restricted area.
- ❑ Teach your children why certain objects, areas, etc. are dangerous. By teaching them the hazards, they will learn better safety practices as they grow.

- **Most importantly, supervise your children properly. No safety product is a substitute for proper adult supervision.**

We hope the above tips help give you a better understanding of some of the potential hazards in and around your home. Many of these safety tips are available on the Consumer Product Safety Commission's website at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).

The information contained in this guide is a collection of information from the Consumer Product Safety Commission and from other sources on the internet.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about this guide or any safety issues, please feel free to contact us.