

Preventing Injuries at Home

More than 4.5 million children are injured in the home every year. Taking simple prevention measures and closely supervising children can help protect them from common household hazards.

Childproofing the home can greatly reduce a child's risk of injury. The best way to find dangers a child might find is to explore at their level - get down on your hands and knees. Go through every room, looking for temptations and anything within reach. Childproofing is not 100% effective, that's why it's important to watch children at all times.

Prevent Falls

- Keep walkways clear of tripping hazards.
- Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Keep floors clean and dry.
- Put non-slip strips in your tub or shower.
- Use a bathmat with a non-skid bottom.
- Keep the house well lit, especially at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Use nightlights in hallways and bathrooms.

Prevent Scalds and Burns

- Set the hot water heater at 120°F or lower. It only takes three seconds for a child to get a third degree burn from 140°F water.
- Check bathwater temperature before putting your child in. It should be less than 105°F.
- Test the temperature of heated food before feeding young children.

Safety Tips for Around the House

- Make sure there is a working smoke alarm in every sleeping area and on every level.
- Have carbon monoxide detectors in every sleeping area and check batteries often. Exposure to this gas can be fatal to a small child.
- Electrical outlets in the bathroom and kitchen should have a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI).
- Cover all unused electrical outlets.
- If firearms are kept in the house, keep them locked, unloaded and stored out of reach. Keep ammunition in a separate, locked location.
- Install window guards on all windows that are not emergency exits. Screens are not strong enough to keep children inside.
- Infants and toddlers can pull on cords of window blinds creating loops large enough to pull around their necks and strangle.

- Young children love to climb on furniture. Furniture can easily tip over and injure them. Secure furniture to walls with brackets and anchors.
- Cushion the sharp edges of furniture.

In the kitchen...

- Use the back burners and turn pot handles toward the back of the stove.
- Keep glassware, knives, appliance cords, placemats, and tablecloths out of reach and away from the edge of counters and tables.
- Keep children away from the range when you are cooking.

In the bathroom...

- Always supervise bath time. Children can drown in one inch of water.
- Install safety locks on toilet lids.
- Keep sharp items such as razors, scissors, and fingernail clippers out of children's reach.

Be sure to have all emergency numbers and the house address posted on or near all phones. Have a well stocked first aid kit.

Also see the Healthy Hints articles titled **Fire Safety** and **Poison Prevention** for more home safety tips.



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