

# Promoting Child Safety at Home

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When you become a parent, your child's safety takes topmost priority and can often leave you overwhelmed, because, it's your job to protect your child. Your adult-friendly home has many potential hazards for a child. But you can keep your child safe by finding out what the dangers are, and then preventing or removing them. But even when you think you've detached all the home safety hazards, the reality is that children can still have tumbles and falls. That's why observation is one of the keys to child safety at home. And along with supervision and a safe environment, you can also improve home safety by teaching your child about what's safe and what's not. There are many steps you can take to defend your child against accidental injury and harmful situations. We rounded up our top baby safety guidelines that'll help you protect and care for your little one.

## Tips for child/ Baby safety in the home

- For bath safety, always supervise and give your full attention to babies and children under five years in the bath. Never leave your baby unattended in the bathtub or bath ring. It only takes a few seconds for a baby to drown.
- Prevent scalds in the bathroom. Reduce the temperature of the hot tap water at the basin. Always test bath water temperature before bathing children – the safest bath temperature is 37-38°C.
- Store small appliances, such as hair dryers and radios, away from the water and bathing areas. Keep these appliances unplugged and out of reach when not in use.
- Do not use a baby support or bath seat to prop the baby up in the bath.
- Never leave an older child to supervise a younger child in the bath.
- Empty the bath immediately after use. And use non-slip mats in your baby's bath area.
- Keep soft toys and soft bedding, including blankets, pillows and bumpers pads, out of the baby's sleep area.
- Avoid feeding your baby raw pieces of carrot and raw apple. Shred, grate or steam hard fruit and vegetables to reduce the risk of choking. Peanuts are not suitable for children under the age of five. Teach children to sit quietly while they are eating, and enjoy an unhurried meal.
- To prevent burns, keep your child away from fire and hot surfaces. Keep a close eye on your child whenever they're near things that can burn- especially around stoves, microwaves, heaters, ovens, and other appliances.
- Keep hot food and drinks away from and out of reach of children.
- Avoid holding your child if you're having hot food and drinks.
- Establish the area in front of the stove as off-limits while you are cooking.
- To prevent burns, do not microwave your baby's bottle. Make sure you test the temperature on your hand or wrist before feeding it to your baby.
- Never prop up your baby's bottle and leave your baby unattended; your baby could choke. Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle.
- Store medicines, chemicals and cleaning products out of reach and in lockable cupboards. Never store toxic substances in bottles or jars that could be mistaken for food products Never "double dip" with baby food. Throw away any unused food after a feeding.
- Never share spoons. If you want to show your baby how to eat, use a separate dish and spoon for yourself.
- Never store opened baby food for more than three days.
- Never feed your baby expired formula.
- Don't use formula from a dented container.

- Use clean bottles and nipples.
- Prepare formula in smaller quantities on an as-needed basis.
- Make sure all drawers have stops so that your baby can't pull the drawer out on top of themselves.
- Anchor down unsteady pieces of furniture, such as bookcases.
- Move furniture with sharp corners away from areas where children run around, like hallways and near doorways. If you can't move the furniture, pad its corners with foam or corner protectors.
- To keep your child safe around glass, install safety glass in windows and doors or apply shatter-resistant film to windows and doors of older homes. Use window guards to prevent your child from tumbling out a window.
- Place furniture away from high windows so children won't climb onto windowsills. Screens aren't strong enough to keep children from falling through windows.
- When you change your baby, make sure you put them down in a safe place, for example, on a change table with raised edges to prevent the baby rolling off. Remember to keep one hand on the baby at all times. Never leave your baby alone on the change table.
- Keep children away from exercise equipment and rooms with heavy duty appliances such as treadmills.
- Use door barriers across kitchen and bathroom doors.
- When your child starts crawling, install safety guards across entries to stairs and balconies. And you still need to supervise your child on stairs and balconies.
- Get a licensed electrician to install safety switches, which cut power off quickly to avoid electrocution.
- Get a licensed electrician to do any repairs.
- Replace electrical appliances and cords if they're worn.
- Use power point covers.
- Unplug and electric tools away whenever you are not using them.
- Leave a hall light on at night, or use sensor lights to make it easier for older children to get to the toilet without tripping.
- Supervise young children whenever they are near the other baby.
- To prevent choking, choose age-appropriate toys with no parts of the toy smaller than a 'D' size battery. Check toys regularly for any small loose parts. Small parts can be a hazard and can choke a child less than three years of age.
- Make sure your child is out of the way when you're using any household tool.
- To keep your child safe from suffocation and strangulation tie knots in plastic bags, and keep them away from children.
- It's a very good idea to do some first aid and CPR training. Keep first aid kits in your home.
- Keep the toilet lid down to prevent drowning and to keep the lid from slamming on your baby's head or hands. Consider installing toilet lid locks.
- If you use an infant carrier, always place it on the floor, never on a counter or table top. Make sure the baby is always strapped in.
- Never leave your baby alone on a bed, couch, changing table, or infant seat from which they can fall or roll off. Even if looking away for a second, an accident can happen.
- Keep sharp objects (knives, scissors, tools, razors) and other hazardous items (coins, glass objects, beads, pins, medications) in a secure place out of your baby's reach.
- NEVER shake a baby or throw your baby in the air. This can cause brain damage or blindness.
- If your home uses gas heat, install a carbon monoxide detector.
- Do not smoke and do not allow smoking around your baby. Even smoking "outside" is harmful for the baby because clothing, hair and skin still carry smoke particles.
- Install a working smoke alarm on every level of your home. Change the batteries of your smoke detectors every 6 months.

- Be cautious with balloons to prevent choking.
  - Never put your child in a walker. They send thousands of kids to the emergency room every year, mainly by causing falls down stairs.
  - NEVER put strings or cords around your baby's neck. Be cautious of strings or buttons on clothing; make sure they are not in danger of choking your baby.
  - Cover areas under and around backyard play sets with shock-absorbing material, such as sand, rubber, or mulch, 9-12 inches deep.
  - During hot summer days, check the temperature of slides and swings. They can become hot enough to cause burns to the skin.
  - Always supervise children on playground equipment. Watch for hazards like stair rungs where they can get stuck, missing guardrails, protruding bolts, or dangling ropes or cords.
  - Keep kids away from driveways and streets.
  - Don't put bug spray on younger babies. Keep them inside when bugs are biting at dawn and dusk. Cover their skin with long sleeves and pants, and cover strollers with mesh netting.
  - Keep animals away from the baby.
  - Keep pet's food and water bowls in an area your baby can't reach. Same with the litter box.
  - Supervise your child's interactions with your pets and teach them to be gentle. Hitting or tail-pulling can lead to bites and scratches.
  - Don't let your animals lick your baby's face or skin, especially if they have a cut or scrape.
  - Wash your child's hands after they play with the dog or cat.
  - Keep the pet toys out of your baby's mouth.
  - Most doctors say pets shouldn't sleep in your child's bed.
  - Don't put babies to sleep with soft toys, crib bumpers or blankets.
- Babies should sleep in a safety approved crib or bassinet, not in bed with their parents or caregivers.
  - Sleep in the same room with your baby until they are at least 6 months old.
  - Pacifiers at naptime and bedtime can reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
  - All infants should be put down for sleep on their backs to reduce the risk for sudden infant death syndrome, also called SIDS.
  - Crib slats should be 2 3/8 inches apart or less so the baby's head can't get trapped.
  - Keep your baby's room at a moderate temperature and dress them in a way that they can't overheat. This also reduces the risk of SIDS.
  - Avoid devices marketed to reduce the risk of SIDS, such as sleep positioners.
  - Keep your baby's head uncovered while they sleep.
  - Don't nurse in a chair or on a couch if you feel you might fall asleep.
  - Try to have skin-to-skin contact with your baby.
  - Breastfeeding your baby provides important immune factors, such as antibodies, to help protect babies from SIDS. Breastfed babies are also more easily aroused from sleep at two to three months of age, which is the peak age of SIDS occurrence.
  - Nursing your baby and making sure that your baby gets all of the recommended vaccines can help protect against SIDS.
  - Gather a list of emergency numbers and keep them by the phone. These numbers should include: your child's paediatrician, your family doctor, the police department, ambulance, the fire department, poisons information centre etc. Always consult your healthcare professional if you have concerns about your baby.

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