

TIPS TO GROW BY

Safety Tips For Toddlers



What's the No. 1 killer of children today? Not cancer. Not birth defects. Not AIDS.

It's accidents — in or near the child's own home. This year, more than 10,000 youngsters under age 14 will die in accidents. And another 1 million will be injured enough to require medical treatment.

Sadly, the vast majority of these accidents could have been prevented.

Don't let your child become a statistic.

Our pediatricians suggest that you follow these simple but practical safety tips:

1. Cars

— Thousands of children's lives would be saved if parents would simply follow this law: any child under age 4 or under 40 pounds must be in an approved car safety seat. Older children should be in seatbelts at all times. One out of every five child deaths is from automobile accidents, and fatalities and injuries skyrocket when proper safety restraints aren't in use.

— Teach your child pedestrian and bicycle safety.

— Trikes and riding toys should be used only on the sidewalks.

2. Fires

— Buy flame-resistant pajamas and material. They are better able to resist flames than ordinary fabrics. That gives you time to put out a fire before a serious injury occurs to your child.

— Be sure radiators have guards.

— Avoid space heaters and floor-level electric fans. These are too tempting for children to explore.

— Turn off the oven when it's not in use. And check inside first before you turn the oven on; you never know when a child has stuffed something in the oven in your absence.

— Make sure your kitchen has an accessible, dry chemical fire extinguisher safely out of the reach of your child. Keep a box of baking soda near the stove for those little flare-ups.

— A clean oven doesn't burst into flames as easily as a dirty one.

— Never leave a child alone in a room when there's a fire in the fireplace, and make sure the fire is covered by a secure screen.

— Lock up matches and cigarette lighters.

— Install smoke detectors and conduct fire drills.

3. Burns

— A child's skin can burn because of heat, not even fire, because the skin is thinner than that of an adult.

— Tap water is a leading cause of burns. Don't let your child turn on hot water faucets. Reduce the maximum heat on your water heater to 120 degrees F.

— Always, always check temperature of the water before putting the child in the bath tub.

— Always turn the handles of pots and pans on the stove inward. Use back burners as much as possible. Remove control knobs that are within a child's reach, when not in use.

— Fry and boil on the back burner to keep splatters as far from a child as possible.

— Never leave a cup of a hot beverage near the edge of a counter or table top.

— Hot coffee pots and coffee makers should be placed where children cannot pull them over.

— Always place hot irons far out of a child's reach during and after use. Don't let the cord dangle.

— Keep your microwave mounted so that the child can't push the buttons. If the door opens while it is cooking, hot splatters could splash out on your child.

— Don't let your child play on a floor register grate.

4. Shoeks

— Cover all electrical outlets. Plastic safety guards are available in many stores for this purpose.

— Place furniture in front of outlets.

— Make sure there are no long wires to trip over and no frayed wires. Fasten excess cord with tape.

— Don't leave lighting fixtures empty. Replace bulbs immediately.

— Unplug small appliances when not in use.

— Never keep hair dryers or other electrical appliances anywhere near sinks or tubs, where they could fall in and electrocute your child.

5. Falls

— Be sure your child cannot open windows and screens himself. Install guards on windows above the first floor.

— Stairs must be in good condition. Make sure carpet or rug is tightly secured. Banisters may require uprights to keep kids from sliding down them. Never let toys or other items collect on stair treads.

— Never let your child hold anything sharp when he or she runs. Frequent falls are typical of toddlers. An arrow, stick, sparkler, or end of a pinwheel could pierce a child's eye or puncture the skin in a fall.

— If throw rugs are used, anchor them securely.

— Put nonslip appliques or strips on the bottom of your bathtub, or use mats.

— Never leave a child in the tub alone. It takes only seconds for a child to drown in as little as one inch of water.

Similarly, keep your toilet lid down and make sure your child knows it's not a toy.

— Until your child is an expert at climbing stairs, keep safety gates at the head and foot of every stairway. But don't use accordion-folding X-rails; young children have been strangled when their heads have become stuck in the diamond-shaped openings.

— Block doors that lead to basements, storage areas, furnace rooms and other hazardous places.

— Attach bookcases to the wall in case your child decides to climb up the "steps."

6. Choking

— Give your child only unbreakable toys without small or removable parts.

— Keep your eyes on the lookout for small items that could be swallowed — marbles, buttons, beads and coins, for example — and keep them away from small children.

— Don't give your child nuts, popcorn, raw carrots, hard candy, hot dogs, balloons or chewing gum.

— Teach your child to take small bites, don't talk or giggle with food in the mouth, and sit upright while eating.

— Dispose of used clear plastic wraps carefully, for kids can choke on them.

7. Suffocation

— Suffocation caused by foreign materials in a child's windpipe is the leading cause of fatal injury in children under age 1 year, and ranks fourth for ages 1 to 4. Big problems include plastic bags, balloons and foods that, because of their shape and consistency, are likely to lodge in the throat and suffocate a child.

— Don't buy rubber or latex balloons. Many hospitals, including Children's Hospital, do not allow them on children's floors, and for good reason. A child either can swallow an uninflated balloon, or suck the broken pieces of popped balloons into the windpipe. The rubber may block the child's airway, causing suffocation, or venture into the intestinal tract, causing a blockage. Since latex doesn't show up on x-ray, it's often hard to determine the cause and location of the problem.

— Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation may only compound the obstruction of the balloon.

— Lock anything your child could crawl into — but not out of.

— Don't use hinged toy chests that could trap a child.

— Dispose of plastic bags. Children love the feel of plastic and the many shapes it can form. But bags such as those that come from the dry cleaners are a major cause of suffocation. Some parents remove the bags while still at the cleaners; others tie several knots in them and dispose of them out of the reach of children.

— Don't keep an unused refrigerator or freezer on your premises. If you do, make sure it's locked or has its door removed.

8. Poisoning

— Call the Akron Regional Poison Center, 379-8562 or 1-800-362-9922, for information and stickers you can keep near every phone in case of emergency.

— Stock your medicine chest with syrup of ipecac to induce vomiting, but do so only on the advice of poison control or medical experts.

— Keep all medicines out of reach in a locked medicine cabinet. Never leave them on a dresser or counter or in your purse. Check to make sure baby-sitters and relatives follow this important rule, too.

— Keep all poisons, cleaning products, beauty products and alcohol out of your child's reach. Examples: liquor, insecticides, lighter fluid, shoe dye, nail polish, paint, cigarettes, and certain plants.

— Non-aerosol products are generally safer and cheaper than aerosols.

— Make sure there's nothing harmful under your kitchen sink. Dishwashing detergent and other household products can be deadly for a curious child.

— Never remove labels from any substance, in case you ever have to know what your child might have swallowed.

— Never store substances in anything other than their original container. A poison in a plastic bowl can look like food or drink to a child.

— Use safety latches in all cabinets and drawers you want to secure. Latches also can slide through handles and knobs to keep doors locked.

9. Cuts

— Knives should be put away at all times.

— Be careful with stored items such as tools and rusty nails.

— Don't store knives, scissors or food-processor blades with other kitchen utensils your child is likely to rummage around in.

— Wrap sharp objects, like can lids and razor blades, before throwing them away.

— Store boxes of foil and plastic wrap up high, for jagged package edges can cause nasty cuts.

— Use plastic and paper dishes and cups instead of breakables.

— Buy corner bumpers for all sharp table corners, consider moving the coffee table out of the living room until your child can walk well.

10. Outside Hazards

— Keep your yard clean and free of broken glass.

— Don't use insecticides around children.

— Remove mushrooms.

— If you have a fence with a gate, make sure the lock is too high for a 2-year-old to open.

— Don't clean garbage cans with poisonous sprays, as a child can get it on their hands or inhale fumes.

— Check outdoor play equipment for damage or hazards.

A knot in a child's windbreaker drawstring can catch on an unsafe slide, causing strangulation.

— Most garage items, such as lawn mowers, snowblowers, and garden tools can be dangerous. Keep kids away.

Your child's physician is an excellent source of further information about toys and child development. This is another in a series of Pediatric Hints brought to you by Baker's Supermarkets and Children's Hospital.

For more information regarding Pediatric Hints, call our nurses at 331-1111.

This information is of a general nature and is not intended to serve as a substitute for the advice of a physician.



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