

Keep Kids Safe

# A Parent's Guide to Home Safety



Always stay with your young child to help prevent and reduce injuries.



Partners in Children's Safety

Special thanks to Emera for supporting home safety.



# Home Safety. It's Never Too Early.



Visit Child Safety Link's  
Virtual Safety Home at  
[www.childsafetylink.ca](http://www.childsafetylink.ca)

The purpose of this booklet is to provide parents and caregivers, with children under 5 years old, information to help "safety proof" the home. Safety proofing your home will not prevent all injuries.

Using this booklet as a guide, go through each room and check to see what you can do to make your home safe.

## A Quick Look at Injuries...

- Injuries are the leading cause of death among Canadian children.
- From 1999-2003 more than 7 000 children visited the IWK Emergency Department with a home injury.
- Most home injuries occur to children under 5 years old.
- Falls are the number one cause of home injuries.
- Other common causes of home injury include fire, poisoning, choking and drowning.



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# Safety in The Kitchen



## Burns

- Cook on the back burners of the stove whenever possible.
- Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove.
- Mark off a “danger zone” around the stove.
- Do not use the microwave oven to cook or heat food or drinks for children.
- Keep a fire extinguisher within reach.
- Do not carry a child and hot liquids at the same time (e.g. coffee).
- A tablecloth can be easily pulled off the table. Use placemats instead.
- Keep appliance cords safely on the countertop, not hanging over the edge.





**Why not the microwave oven?** A microwave oven heats unevenly. This can cause "hot pockets" in food and drinks, where some spots have cooked faster than others. A child can be badly burned from food or drink that is too hot. If you use the microwave, be sure to stir food and shake drinks really well to remove these hot spots. Be sure to test it yourself before giving it to your child.



### Safety Tip

Mark off a "danger zone" around the stove by taping off a square in front of the stove about arm's length away. Teach small children to stay safely outside the "zone".

## Falls

- Make sure the highchair has a wide base and the belt is fastened securely whenever the child is sitting in it.
- Never leave a child alone in a highchair.

## Choking/Suffocation

- Cut food into very small pieces. For example, the size of a grape cut into eight pieces.
- Tie a knot in the middle of all plastic bags. Keep them out of children's reach.

## Poisoning

- Keep all medicines, household cleaners and poisonous products locked in a high cupboard out of children's reach.
- Store poisonous products in original containers.



**It only takes a minute...** Nathan and Susan are folding clothes while eight-month-old Dylan is in the playpen. Dylan begins to cry and Nathan takes him out of his crib to play on the floor. While they continue to fold the clothes, Dylan quickly crawls into the kitchen, opens the cupboard doors under the sink and reaches for the floor cleaner.

Children under 5 years old should not be given nuts, popcorn, hard candy or gum because they can easily choke on these foods.



# Safety in The Living Room



## Burns

- Keep candles out of children's reach.
- Fireplaces and woodstoves should have a non-flammable barrier around them, when burning, to prevent children from getting too close.

## Falls

- Look for sharp edges on furniture. Tape foam over them or remove them from the room.
- Do not have furniture in front of windows, or near balcony rails, that children can climb on.
- Keep balcony doors locked at all times.
- Make sure floor lamps are sturdy. Use wall or ceiling lamps instead.
- Check that televisions and other heavy furniture are secure. If needed, use brackets to attach them to the wall.
- Baby walkers with wheels are banned in Canada. Instead, use an activity centre that stays in one place.



## What can I do to keep my TV from toppling?

Televisions can fall on children causing serious injury. While most injuries happen when children are unsupervised, parents should also:

- Keep televisions on secure stands that are meant to fit the size of your TV. Secure the stand to the wall if needed.
- Place the TV as far back as possible on the stand.
- Do not place remotes or other items on top of the TV where children will try to reach them.



### Safety Tip

Children can easily open the battery door on the back of remote controls and put batteries in their mouths. Try wrapping strong tape around the remote controls in your home.

## Choking

- Use a blind cord wrapper, a cleat on the wall, a twist-tie or clothespin to keep blind cords out of children's reach.
- Keep small items such as coins, buttons and batteries (including disc batteries) out of children's reach.
- Make sure your playpen is in good condition. If the rails or floor have a tear, a child may bite off a piece and choke.
- Do not have necklaces, or soother cords in the playpen or around a child's neck.
- Keep purses out of children's reach, including visitors' purses, which often contain small items such as coins and medications.

## Poisoning

- Keep cigarettes and ashtrays with cigarette butts out of children's reach.
- Keep plants off the floor and out of children's reach.



**It only takes a minute...** Grandma Josephine came to visit her daughter Eva, and two year old granddaughter Heather. After visiting in the living room for 10 minutes, they decide to make a quick cup of tea in the kitchen. When they returned to the living room, Heather had dumped grandma's purse out on the floor and was trying to open a bottle of pills.

A child can become very sick from eating only 3 or 4 cigarette butts.



# Safety in The Bathroom



## Drowning

- *NEVER* leave a child alone in the bathtub, not even for a second!
- Do not use a baby bath seat or bath ring.
- Children can drown in a toilet bowl if they fall in headfirst. Put a lid lock on your toilet seat to keep children out.

## Falls

- Use non-slip mats for inside and outside the bathtub.
- Use a padded cover over the bathtub spout.





**Why does children's skin burn so fast?** Children's skin is thinner and more sensitive than adults' skin. Most hot water tanks are set to 60°C (140°F), which is too hot. Have your tank lowered to a safer 49°C (120°F) or have an anti-scald device installed either on the tank or on each faucet.



### Safety Tip

Always run the cold water first and last in the tub. If the child manages to grab the hot water tap and turn it on, it will run cold for a few seconds. This may be enough time for you to turn it off.

## Burns

- Turn children facing away from taps when they are bathing.
- Before putting your child into the bath, test the water with your elbow.
- Make sure your hot water tank is set to 49°C (120°F).



## Poisoning

- Use medicines with child-resistant tops, whenever possible.
- Never call medicine candy.
- Never give or take medicine in the dark.
- Keep all medicines and make-up in a high, locked cabinet.
- Have one person give medicine to avoid double dosing.



**It only takes a minute...** Victor is giving six-month-old Amir a bath when the phone rings. Victor leaves Amir alone in his bath seat as he runs to grab the portable telephone. When he returns, he finds Amir face down in the tub.

A child can drown in two inches of water.



## Safety in The Bedroom



### Falls

- Cribs made after 1986, and sold in Canada, meet today's safety standards.
- Check that bars on the crib are no more than 6 cm (2 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches) apart.
- Keep side rails on the crib locked in place when the child is in the crib.
- As soon as the child can sit up on its own, the mattress should be placed on the lowest level.
- Make sure the crib is placed well away from windows.
- To stop furniture, like dressers, from falling on top of a child, try bolting them to the wall.
- Keep dresser drawers closed to prevent climbing.
- Use window guards or stops on windows to prevent them from opening more than 10 cm (4 in).



## Safety Tip

Use a pop can standing upright to test if the crib bars are too far apart. If it can fit through the bars, they are too wide.

- If using a changing table, use the safety strap and have one hand on the child at ALL times.
- Consider using the floor as a safer place for diaper changing.

## Choking/Suffocation

- Place your baby on its back to sleep.
- Do not have pillows, stuffed animals, toys or heavy blankets in the crib with the baby.
- Do not use bumper pads in the crib.
- Do not have soother cords in the crib or around your baby's neck.
- As soon as the child can sit up on its own, remove all mobiles and hanging toys.
- Make sure the mattress fits tightly in the crib. Have no more than two finger widths between the mattress and the crib bars.
- If your toy box has a lid, make sure it has holes in it so that a child can breathe if he/she climbs in and gets stuck. It's better to have no lid at all!

## Poisoning

- Keep diaper-changing products (diaper pins, powders, diaper rash ointments, etc.) well out of your child's reach.
- Never store medications in the bedside table.



**It only takes a minute...** Lauren put three month old Emily down for her nap. An hour later Lauren checks on Emily, only to find she has slipped between the mattress and the crib bars due to a poorly fitting mattress.

Small toys and items can be choking hazards. Generally, if it can fit through a toilet paper roll, it is too small for children under 3 years old.



# Safety All Around The Home



## Burns

- Make sure you have smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors installed and working on each floor of your home and outside sleeping areas. Also have smoke alarms in all sleeping rooms.
- Cover unused electrical outlets with outlet plugs.

## Falls

- Do not place furniture in front of windows.
- *NEVER* use a pressure gate (uses pressure to stay in place) at the top of stairs. Use a swing gate (screws into the wall and swings open one way) instead. Make sure it does not swing out over the stairs.
- Do not rely on window screens to keep your child safe. Put guards on windows.
- Do not place throw rugs at the top of stairs. Always use rugs with a non-slip back so they will stay in place.



## Poisoning

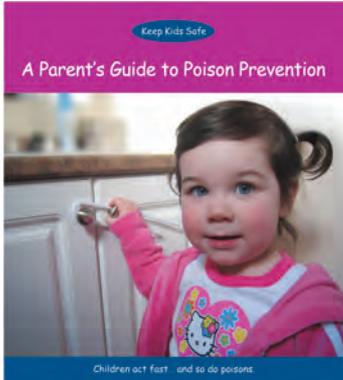
- Know the names of all of the plants in the house in case of a poisoning.
- In the garage, keep all vehicle products (e.g. windshield washer, antifreeze) out of children's reach.
- Never start a vehicle inside a closed garage.
- Place the Poison Centre emergency number on or near every telephone in the house.



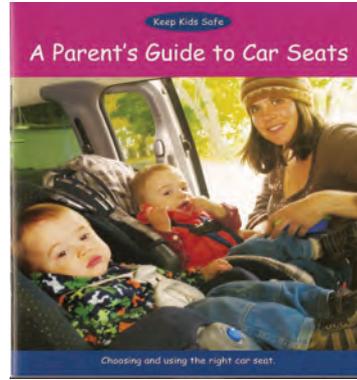
# Toy Safety

- Always choose toys suitable to the child's age. Age recommendations on toys are often about safety and not the ability of the child.
- Toys with small parts are a choking hazard for children under three years.
- Keep toys with small magnets out of young children's reach. They can be very dangerous if swallowed.
- Toys with long strings or cords should not be used by babies or young children as they can get wrapped around children's necks.
- Latex balloons can be a choking hazard. Use foil balloons instead.
- Make sure batteries in toys are secured. If swallowed, batteries can cause chemical burns.

# Other Keep Kids Safe Booklets



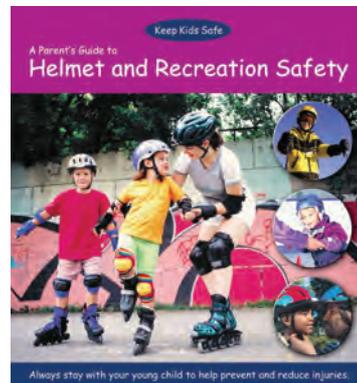
**Poison Prevention Guide**  
Available in English and French.



**Car Seat Safety Guide**  
Available in English and French.



**Playground Safety Guide**  
Available in English and French.



**Helmet and Recreation Safety Guide**  
Available in English and French.

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Special thanks to everyone that contributed personal photos for the creation of this home safety guide.

## Looking for more information?

### Injury Prevention

#### **Child Safety Link**

[www.childsafetylink.ca](http://www.childsafetylink.ca), call 1-866-288-1388

#### **Canadian Paediatric Society**

[www.caringforkids.cps.ca/keepingkidssafe](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/keepingkidssafe)

#### **Safe Kids Canada**

[www.safekidscanada.ca](http://www.safekidscanada.ca)

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### Product Safety

#### **Government of Canada - Healthy Canadians**

[http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/pr-rp/index\\_e.php](http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/pr-rp/index_e.php)

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### Poisoning Prevention

#### **Canadian Association of Poison Control Centres**

[www.capcc.com](http://www.capcc.com)

#### **Regional Poison Centre, in the event of an emergency:**

In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick call 911

On Prince Edward Island call 1-800-565-8161

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For more information, contact:

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Aussi disponible en français

[www.CHILDSafetyLINK.ca](http://www.CHILDSafetyLINK.ca)