



# SAFETY starts at HOME

## THE ESSENTIAL CHILDPROOFING GUIDE

### FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Unintentional injury is the number one killer of children under 14. Sadly, many of these deaths occur where children are thought to be the safest—at home. Teach parents how they can childproof their homes and prevent such tragedies with *Safety Starts at Home*. This valuable resource brings together current guidelines from many national safety organizations, so you can feel confident that you are presenting the latest information.

#### Intended Use

This video is intended for use in childbirth classes, parenting classes, public health departments, home visits, or as part of a lending library. The target audience is new and expectant parents of any age and parents of young children.

#### Recommended Facilitator Presentation

- Review the video and facilitator's guide.
- Make the necessary number of copies of the *Room-by-Room Home Safety Checklist* included in this guide
- Present the video entirely or in segments
- Provide your class members with copies of the *Room-by-Room Home Safety Checklist* before they leave class

#### Program Overview

- 1. The Safe Baby** (8:33 minutes)
  - Cribs, abusive head trauma (shaken baby syndrome), SIDS, tobacco exposure, and more
- 2. Choking, Suffocation, and Strangulation** (6:42 minutes)
  - Food hazards, propped bottles, small objects, balloons, plastic bags, storage chests, items with strings, window coverings
- 3. Poison Patrol** (5:30 minutes)
  - Household poisons, cabinet locks, plants, lead, pesticides, and more
- 4. Burn Hazards** (6:28 minutes)
  - Stoves, hot dishes, microwaves, appliance safety, fireplaces, outlets, water temperature
- 5. Drowning Prevention** (2:30 minutes)
  - Hazards, toilet locks, touch supervision
- 6. Preventing Falls** (3:35 minutes)
  - Changing tables, furniture, windows, stairs, baby gates
- 7. Fire Safety** (4:01 minutes)
  - Cigarette smoking, matches/lighters, gasoline, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers, family fire drill, escape ladders
- 8. Preparing for Emergencies** (2:43 minutes)
  - Contact lists, CPR, gun safety, first aid and disaster supply kits



# Room-by-Room Home Safety Checklist

*Remember to get down on the floor and look at each room of your house from your child's point of view. You may be surprised at the hazards you see.*

## General Recommendations

### Fire Safety

- Remove or eliminate all potential fire hazards from your home.
- Smoke outside only, using a heavy ashtray with a middle island for holding burning cigarettes.
- Never throw cigarette butts on the ground.
- Extinguish candles before you leave the room.
- Keep matches and lighters locked away and out of the reach of children. Only use child-resistant lighters.
- Keep flammable liquids, such as gasoline in approved containers outside of the home. Store in a well ventilated, locked shed or detached garage, and away from any source of ignition.
- Place space heaters and other heat sources at least three feet away from walls, upholstered furniture, bedding, drapes, rugs, and other combustible material.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement and inside and outside of every sleeping area. Test alarms monthly, and change their batteries twice each year. Replace your smoke alarms after 10 years.
- Plan escape routes and conduct fire drills with the entire family. Find two ways out of each room. Decide on a close place for your family to meet after exiting and choose which parent is responsible for young children.

### Appliance Safety

- Place covers on all electrical outlets. If you use individual outlet caps, choose the bigger ones that cannot turn into choking hazards if pulled out.
- Tie up long appliance cords.
- Unplug appliances that are not in use.
- Make sure your appliances are safe and have the 'UL' mark of approval.
- Carefully supervise the use of any appliance that gets hot and promptly put it away after it cools off to avoid burns.
- Install ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlets around any source of water.

### Choking/Suffocation

- Go through every room of your house and remove small objects like coins from your children's reach that could be considered choking hazards.
- Lock up or remove suffocation hazards, such as coolers and toy chests. The best choice for a toy chest is one without a lid or one with a lightweight, removable lid. If you use a toy chest that closes, it should also have ventilation holes.

### Window Safety

- Make every window covering in your home child-safe by keeping the cords out of your child's reach.
- If you have looped cords on blinds, cut the loop and tie up out of reach. Look into cordless window coverings.
- Install window guards or window stopping devices to prevent dangerous falls. (check local codes)

### Lead

- Get the tap water in your home tested for lead, especially if you have an older home.
- If your house was built before 1978, have the paint professionally tested for lead. To remove lead paint, hire a certified lead-based paint professional to do the job.
- If your children have been exposed to lead, talk to your doctor about having them tested for lead poisoning.

### Preparing for Emergencies

- Since emergencies do happen, post an emergency phone list, including the poison hotline, 1-800-222-1222, near a common place like the refrigerator.
- Enroll yourself and anyone that provides care for your child in an infant/child CPR and first aid course.
- Prepare a first aid kit, including bandages of several sizes, tweezers, alcohol preps or other antiseptic, tape, and a small pair of scissors.
- Prepare a disaster supply kit, including bottled water, non-perishable food, baby food, flashlights, batteries, and a battery-powered radio.
- Remove guns from your home and find out if there are guns at other homes where your children play. At the very least, firearms and ammunition should be locked up in separate locations.

## Kitchen

*The kitchen can be a very dangerous room when it comes to burn and scald injuries.*

- Keep young children away from the cooking area.
- Have a functioning fire extinguisher on hand.
- Use only the back burners on your stove and keep pot handles facing to the rear.
- Do not allow children to use the microwave and never heat a bottle in the microwave. Before offering microwave-heated food to your child, stir it, let it stand for 30 seconds, and taste it in several places to make sure it is only lukewarm.
- Keep knives out of your child's reach.
- Place all hot dishes and beverages in the middle of the table out of your child's reach and avoid using placemats or tablecloths.
- Never carry your child while you're carrying hot food or drinks.
- Securely lock away any poisons that you keep in the kitchen, such as cleaning supplies and alcohol.
- Do not feed children under six any hard, round food that he might choke on.
- Supervise your child at mealtime and never leave a baby alone with a propped bottle.
- The kitchen trash can contain hazardous objects. Keep the trash out of your child's sight and reach.

## Bathroom

*The bathroom contains many hidden dangers, including drowning, burns, and poisoning.*

- Always supervise your child in the bathroom, especially at bath time.
- Install locks on the toilet and always keep the lid closed.
- Empty bathwater immediately after use.
- To avoid hot water burns, set your hot water heater to 120 degrees or lower.
- Regulate and test the bathwater before your child gets in. Consider purchasing a thermometer, bath mat, a soft faucet cover, and an anti-scald nozzle for extra protection.
- To avoid electrocution, keep electrical appliances away from sinks or tubs.
- Lock up poisons that are commonly kept in the bathroom, such as cosmetics, drain clog remover, rubbing alcohol, medicine, and vitamins and supplements, including iron supplements.

## Nursery/Baby Area

*Of course you want to keep the newest member of your family safe.*

- To reduce the risk of SIDS, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, always lay your baby down to sleep on her back, have a firm, tight-fitting mattress, and remove everything else from her crib.
- Remember not to sacrifice savings for safety when it comes to baby products. Use a new crib that meets the current standards and position it safely in the room, away from furniture, windows, blinds, and drapery cords.
- Position mobiles high above the crib. Remove any hanging crib toys when the baby begins to push up on hands and knees, or when the baby is five months old (whichever comes first).
- Look for the JPMA certification seal on your baby equipment.
- Stay up-to-date on recalled products, including car seats.
- Register products so you can be contacted in the case of a recall.
- When it comes to baby toys, buy only those that do not contain small parts, and only use toys that are labeled appropriately for your child's age.
- Use a toilet paper roll as a small parts tester/choke tube to make certain a toy is not a choking hazard.
- Dress your baby in clothing without drawstrings and avoid strangulation hazards like necklaces, bibs (except at mealtime) and pacifiers with strings.
- Never leave your baby alone where she might fall, especially on a changing table. Always use any available restraints.
- Use a stationery activity center rather than a wheeled baby walker.
- Since serious injuries or death can result from just one episode of shaking, NEVER shake your baby, no matter how frustrated you feel. Instead, put your baby in a safe place, such as a crib, and take a timeout to give yourself a chance to gather your composure.

## Living Area

*Your living area also needs to be safe, especially once your child becomes mobile. In fact, your home needs to be ready before your child's next developmental stage.*

- Gates need to be properly installed at the top and bottom of stairs. Top gates should be hardware-mounted to the wall.
- Remove or cushion the edges of sharp-edged furniture.
- Secure heavy furniture to the wall by using angle braces or anchors.
- Remove or secure other heavy objects, such as televisions.
- Remove area rugs, add a non-skid backing or place a non-skid mat underneath them.
- Identify and remove poisonous houseplants.

## Garage/Shed

*If you have a garage or shed, it's a good idea to make it off-limits for children, since it usually houses dangerous tools and chemicals.*

- Keep poisons, such as antifreeze and windshield wiper fluid, locked up out of your child's reach.
- Have a functioning fire extinguisher on hand.
- Install a reverse-motion sensor on your garage door so it will never close on your child.
- Empty any bucket right away and store it upside down, since even an inch of water is a drowning hazard.

This room-by-room checklist is a great place to start in childproofing your home. And, while safety starts at home, it doesn't end there. Learn how to protect your children against hazards when it comes to cars, yards, pets, playgrounds, swimming pools, daycare facilities, school, roads, and other places within your community. Good luck to you in your ongoing effort to keep your family healthy and safe. The following resources can help you:



### General

- Holtzman, Debra. *The Panic-Proof Parent: Creating a Safe Lifestyle for Your Family*. (Book available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).) To ask the author about specific issues and to learn about her most recent books, you may contact her at [www.thesafetyexpert.com](http://www.thesafetyexpert.com).
- National SAFE KIDS Campaign, [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org), (202) 662-0600
- Consumer Products Safety Commission, [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov), (800) 638-2772 (product recalls)
- National Safety Council, [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org), (630) 285-1121
- Underwriters Laboratories, Inc., [www.ul.com](http://www.ul.com)

### Fire Safety

- National Fire Protection Agency, [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org), (617) 770-3000
- U.S. Fire Administration, [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov), (301) 447-1000

### Poison

- National Poison Hotline (800) 222-1222
- National Capital Poison Center, [www.poison.org](http://www.poison.org), (202) 362-3867

### Lead/Carbon Monoxide/Radon

- Environmental Protection Agency, [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov), (202) 260-2090

### Drowning Prevention

- American Red Cross, [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org), (202) 639-3520

### Baby

- American SIDS Institute, [www.sids.org](http://www.sids.org), (800) 232-SIDS
- Shaken Baby Alliance, [www.shakenbaby.com](http://www.shakenbaby.com), (877) 6-END-SBS
- Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association, [www.jpma.org](http://www.jpma.org), (856) 638-0420
- Baby Center, [www.babycenter.com](http://www.babycenter.com)

### Childproofing Products

- Guardian Angel Window Guards available at Automatic Specialties, [www.auspin.com](http://www.auspin.com), (800) 445-2370
- Perfectly Safe Catalog, [www.perfectlysafe.com](http://www.perfectlysafe.com), (888) 373-4027