



## Centre Medical and Surgical Associates, P.C.

YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER FOR LIFE

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# Childproofing Your Home

Accidents are the number one killer of children ages 1–4. It is estimated that 22 million children are involved in accidents each year in the home and yard alone. As many as nine out of ten of these accidents could have been prevented by following simple household safety measures. Remember that babies can get into trouble faster than you can imagine. If there's a dangerous spot in the house, a baby will surely find it. Before your baby begins to crawl, there are some household precautions you will want to take to ensure his or her safety.

## KITCHEN SAFETY

- If you keep cleaners under your kitchen sink, you need to move these substances to an elevated place out of your baby's reach.
- Electrical outlet plugs should be purchased to protect your baby from possible shock.
- Place stove covers over the burners of the stove or cook on the back burners.
- Move any sharp objects, tiny objects, or poisonous objects to a drawer with a safety latch.
- Keep baking soda and a fire extinguisher in the kitchen area, in case of a cooking fire.
- Make sure any alcoholic beverages are kept out of your baby's reach.
- All tablecloths should be secured to the table, so your child cannot pull anything off onto him/herself.
- Dispose of any plastic grocery bags and dry cleaning bags immediately as they can cause suffocation.
- All glassware should be placed in high cupboards out of reach.
- Keep garbage bins locked, so that your baby does not have access to them.
- Never hold or pass hot liquids over your baby.
- Never let your baby pick up any sharp objects like scissors or sharp pencils.
- Remove any cigarettes, lighters, ash-trays, and matches from your baby's reach.
- Keep your purse out of reach of your baby. Many small objects like coins can easily find their way into your baby's mouth.

## LIVING ROOM SAFETY

- Keep fans and space heaters out of your baby's reach. Your baby could be severely burned or cut if she/he comes in contact with these objects.
- Electrical outlet plugs should be purchased to protect your baby from possible shock.
- Keep windows locked to prevent your child from falling outside.
- Remove or shorten any cord that your child can reach. Cords from blinds or drapes can cause strangulation.
- Always pick up toys, so that no one slips and falls on them.
- Place decals on any glass doors at your baby's height, so that they do not walk into the glass.
- Make sure all furniture is secure, so your baby cannot pull anything over on himself/herself.

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## BEDROOM SAFETY

- Keep pillows out of the crib until your baby is over one year old.
- Electrical outlet plugs should be purchased to protect your baby from possible shock
- Keep small jewelry, perfumes and colognes, shoe polishing materials, belts, scarves, and ties out of reach from your baby.
- Never lock a baby in a room
- Make sure closets can be opened from the inside, so that your toddler doesn't get locked in
- Never allow your baby to sleep with a bib on.
- Keep older children's toys out of reach of your toddler.
- Minute batteries are another hazard for your baby. Button batteries can be found in watches, small toys, computer games, and other small gadgets. The National Button Battery Ingestion Hotline is (202)-625-3333

## BATHROOM SAFETY

- Never leave your baby alone in the bathroom for any reason what-so-ever! Babies can drown very easily and quickly without constant supervision.
- To reduce the risk of scald injuries, decrease the temperature of your hot water heater to less than 125 degrees
- When running bathtub water, be sure to turn off the hot water first, so that if your baby accidentally turns on the water, she/he is not burned by the water left in the faucet
- Keep all medicines, cosmetics, and razor blades well out of reach
- Faucet covers can be placed over the water spout, but these can easily slip off if you're not careful.
- You may be surprised to know that babies are capable of drowning in toilet bowls. If you cannot purchase a toilet latch, remember to keep the bathroom door closed.
- Never leave any electrical appliances plugged in near water.

## STAIR & HALLWAY SAFETY

- Place smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in your home (one per floor). Carbon monoxide is an odorless, poisonous gas produced by gas, oil, coal and wood burners.
- Block access to all stairways from your baby.
- Hallways and stairs should always be well lit
- Always hold onto the safety railing when carrying your baby down the steps
- Install safety gates to close off high risk areas, such as: bathrooms, kitchens, laundry rooms, and stairs (safety gates are **not** always very reliable. Some gates can be dislodged by babies, and some have small pieces that babies can swallow)

## CRIB SAFETY

- Make sure crib is free of paint chips
- Vertical slats should be less than 2 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches apart. All cribs manufactured after 1974 fulfill this requirement.
- Crib mattresses should always be firm; springs last longer than foam (soft mattress can cause suffocation)
- Nonallergenic mattresses are better for your baby.
- You should cover your baby's mattress with a waterproof material, and then place a fitted sheet over top of the waterproof cover

- Bumpers should not be used to line the sides of the bed.
- Pillows should never be used because they can cause suffocation.
- Warm babies are happy babies; try to keep your baby's sleeping area around 70°F.
- Never use an electric blanket on your baby.
- Place your baby's bed in a place where it is not in direct contact with either a window or heater. Drapery and blind pulls may cause strangulation.
- Avoid mobiles and crib gyms that may entrap your child.
- Place your child on his back to sleep to reduce risk of SIDS.

## HIGH-CHAIR SAFETY

Look for these characteristics in a high chair:

- Meets the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA) standards for safety
- Has a wide, sturdy base
- Cannot be pulled over by your child.
- Includes a sliding tray will not pinch your baby's fingers.
- Can be easily cleaned
- Crotch strap is durable and adjustable
- Tray has lips on it to help keep food on the tray and not the floor.
- Footrest is adjustable
- Back of the seat is high enough to support your baby's head
- Never leave your baby unattended in a high-chair for any reason

## WATER SAFETY

Children can drown in only a few inches of water, even if they have had swimming lessons. The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend swimming classes for children under the age of three. If you do enroll your child in a swimming class under the age of three, makes sure the class follows the guidelines set by the national YMCA. A child under the age of three should not be submerged.

Since babies and toddlers have heads that are much bigger in proportion to their bodies, it is very important to not allow them to encounter even small bodies of water, for example: ponds, puddles, ditches, fountains, streams, creeks, rain barrels, storm drains, watering cans, and even buckets! Since the head is much larger in comparison to the rest of the body, a baby or toddler can tip over head-first into a bucket or any container, not be able to get out, and therefore drown in a small amount of water.

- Constant supervision of little ones is necessary to make sure they never fall into anything containing water.
- Inflatable pools and kiddie pools should be emptied and put away after each swim.
- Never allow your baby to be left alone in any amount of water.
- CPR training can be very helpful, in the case of an emergency.
- If you have a swimming pool at home, it needs to be kept off limits to your baby at all times. Gates with child-proof locks are a good idea for protecting your child.
- Pool covers should be completely removed and stored away from the pool before anyone swims in the pool. Even if your pool is covered, you should still keep the gate locked. If kids try to walk or crawl on the cover, they can fall through and get trapped underneath.
- Safety rings, ropes, and poles should be kept near the pool at all times.
- Children should always wear life-preservers when swimming in deep water or participating in any water activities. Make sure that the life-preserver has a flotation collar to keep the head upright and face out of the water.

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- Spas, hot-tubs and jacuzzis are safety hazards for your child due to potential drowning and/or overheating hazards
- Swimming pools, wells, natural springs, cisterns, ponds, dams, lakes, streams, storm drains, etc. should all be closed off in some way from your baby.
- Buckets, tubs, old tires, or any object that can hold even just a small amount of water should be made inaccessible to your baby. Babies can drown in very small amounts of water. They fall in or get stuck and it doesn't take much to fill their little lungs
- Remember, no safety measure can take the place of a watchful parent

## PET SAFETY

- Most kids like pets, and most pets like kids. Unfortunately, this is not true for all animals and all kids. If you do have a pet of some kind in or outside of your home, you should use precaution when allowing contact between your child and your pet. Pets can sometimes bite, scratch, and/or even suffocate children without meaning to harm them, so be sure to supervise the playtime between your pet and child.
- Animals also have a tendency to become jealous of new babies. Be sure to give your pet just as much attention as you did before your baby arrived. Some veterinarians suggest that you record baby's crying before your new baby arrives, to get your pet ready for the new sounds. Cats should be spayed or neutered prior to your baby's arrival to reduce the risk of aggressive behavior.
- Pets should have a check up before your baby arrives. Pets can carry certain diseases that can harm your baby, such as: rabies, ringworm, toxoplasmosis, and strep. Along with diseases, pets can also carry such things as fleas, mites, ticks, and lice. Check your pet for any of these things prior to allowing your baby to come into contact with the animal.
- Before touching your baby after playing with your pet, always wash your hands. If your baby plays with your pet, wash his/her hands immediately following the exposure.
- Litter boxes should be hidden from your child, or at least kept well out of his/her reach.
- Your pet's food and water bowls should also be kept out of reach of your little one.
- Ferrets are dangerous pets for children because of biting injuries. Never keep one near an infant.

## SUNSHINE SAFETY

When the weather breaks and the sun is shining, you'll probably want to start taking your baby outside. Even though your baby might not be able to crawl or walk yet, it is important to make sure that he/she does not leave your sight for even a moment.

Before you take your baby outside, you need to provide some kind of protection from harmful sun rays. Sun burns can leave your baby with redness, soreness, blisters, fever, chills, and headaches. The sun can also harm your baby without burning him/her; exposure builds up over the years and can cause other health problems later in life.

If your child does get sunburned and has mild redness:

- apply cool wash cloths or towels to the area
- give your baby a cool bath
- acetaminophen may also be given

For blisters, fever, or chills:

- contact your physician right away