



# Home Safety Checklist

Is your house a safe place for your child to live and play?

This safety checklist can help you prevent serious injuries or even death. Keep in mind that every house is different. Because there may be other safety concerns in your house, a more thorough safety check is recommended at least every 6 months.

## Throughout the Home

- Teach your child how to call 911 in an emergency.
- Post the Poison Help number 1-800-222-1222 by every phone in your home and program the number into your cell phone.
- Make sure to have a plan of escape from your home in case of a fire. Review and practice the plan with your family.
- Install smoke alarms inside every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, in furnace areas, and on every level of your home, including the basement. Buy alarms with long-life lithium batteries. Standard batteries should be changed every year. Test alarms every month to make sure they are working properly.
- Install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms outside each sleeping area and on each floor of your home. CO is a toxic gas that has no taste, no color, and no odor. It comes from appliances or heaters that burn gas, oil, wood, propane, or kerosene.
- A home is safest without firearms. If you must have a gun, make sure the gun is stored unloaded and locked in a safe or with a trigger lock, with the bullets locked in another place.
- Make sure all the rooms in your home are free from small parts, plastic bags, small toys, coins, and balloons that your child could choke on. Keep magnets and button-cell batteries out of sight and out of reach of children. Frequently check in, around, and under furniture for these items.
- Secure bookshelves, dressers, TVs, and all tall or heavy furniture to the wall with straps, brackets, or screws.
- Use cordless window coverings in all homes where children live or visit. If this is not possible, make sure drapery and blind cords are tied up high, with no loops. Loose cords can strangle children, so remember to check the cords in all rooms to make sure they are out of reach.
- Make sure window guards are secured to prevent a child from falling out the window.
- Block all stairs by using child gates.
- Check electrical cords and replace any cords that are worn, frayed, or damaged. Never overload outlets. Cords should run *behind* furniture and not hang down for children to pull on. Remove unused cords.
- Store matches and lighters out of your child's reach or in a locked cabinet. Teach your child that matches and lighters are to be used by adults only.
- Only use candles when an adult is in the room. Blow out candles if you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Keep houseplants out of your child's reach because some may be poisonous. Teach your child to never pick and eat anything from an indoor or outdoor plant. Also, teach your child to ask an adult first before picking and eating homegrown fruits or vegetables.

## Child's Bedroom

### Changing Table

- Never leave your child unattended. Keep supplies within arm's reach and always use the safety belt to help prevent falls. Try to keep a hand on your child at all times, even when using the safety belt.
- If you use baby powder, use one made with cornstarch. Pour it out carefully and keep the powder away from baby's face. Published reports indicate that talc (also called *talcum powder*) in baby powder can injure a baby's lungs.

### Crib

- Reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). All healthy babies younger than 1 year should sleep on their backs—at nap time and at night. The safest place for your baby to sleep is in a crib, on a firm mattress with a fitted sheet. Infants should never sleep in an adult bed or on a couch.
- Keep pillows, quilts, bumpers, comforters, sheepskins, and stuffed toys out of your baby's crib. They can cover your baby's face—even if she is lying on her back.
- Don't hang anything with strings or ribbons over cribs. Keep monitor cords well away from the crib and make sure your baby cannot reach any window cords.
- Use a crib that meets current standards. It should not have a drop side or any raised corner posts or cutouts, where loose clothing could get snagged and strangle your baby. Also, the slats should be no more than 2 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches apart, and the mattress should fit snugly to prevent entrapment. All cribs purchased after June 28, 2011, are required to meet the current standard.
- Tighten all the screws, bolts, and other hardware securely to prevent the crib from collapsing. Only use hardware provided by the manufacturer.

### Other Bedroom Items

- Keep night-lights away from drapes or bedding, where they could start a fire. Buy only cool night-lights that do not get hot.
- Store toys in a box or basket without a lid. If a toy chest has a lid, make sure it has safe hinges that hold the lid open and do not pinch. The chest should also have air holes in case your child gets trapped inside.
- Use a cool-mist humidifier or vaporizer to avoid burns. Clean it according to manufacturer instructions to avoid bacteria and mold growth.

## Kitchen

- Store sharp knives, other sharp utensils, dishwasher detergent, and other cleaning supplies in a locked cabinet.
- Keep chairs and stools away from counters and the stove, where a child could climb up and get hurt.

- ❑ Use the back burners and point pot handles toward the back of the stove to keep them out of your child's reach. Keep your child away from the stove when someone is cooking.
- ❑ Keep electrical appliances out of your child's reach and unplugged when not in use. Appliance cords should be tucked away so they cannot be reached by a child.
- ❑ Use a high chair that is sturdy and has a seat belt with a crotch strap.
- ❑ Keep a working fire extinguisher in the kitchen and know how and when to use it.

## Bathroom

- ❑ Always stay within arm's reach of your infant or young child when he is in the bathtub. Many bathtub drownings happen (even in a few inches of water) when a parent leaves an infant or young child alone or with another young child.
- ❑ Keep the bathroom door closed when the bathroom is not in use. Keep the toilet seat cover down and consider using a toilet lid latch. Use a doorknob cover to keep your child out of the bathroom when you are not there.
- ❑ Place a nonskid bath mat in the bathtub and on the floor.
- ❑ Keep all medicines, toiletries, cosmetics, and cleaning supplies out of your child's reach. Store these items in locked cabinets. Make sure all medicines have child-resistant caps on them.
- ❑ Unplug and store hair dryers, curling irons, and other electrical appliances out of your child's reach.
- ❑ Make sure the outlets in the bathroom have ground fault interrupters (GFIs).
- ❑ To prevent scalding, adjust your water heater so the hottest temperature at the faucet is no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit (48.9 degrees Celsius).

## Family Room

- ❑ Pad edges and corners of tables.
- ❑ Secure TVs to the wall with anchoring straps so they don't tip over. TVs should only be put on furniture that is low, sturdy, and designed to hold them.
- ❑ Place a barrier around the fireplace or other heat sources.

## Playground

- ❑ Make sure swings are made of soft materials, such as rubber, plastic, or canvas.
- ❑ Use wood chips, mulch, or shredded rubber under play equipment. It should be at least 9 inches deep for play equipment up to 7 feet high. Rake it back under the swings and slides often to keep it the right depth.
- ❑ Make sure home playground equipment is put together correctly, sits on a level surface, and is anchored firmly to the ground.

## Pool

- ❑ Make sure to have a fence at least 4 feet high around all sides of the pool to separate the pool from the house and the rest of the yard. A child should not be able to climb the fence. The gate on the fence should open outward, self-close, and self-latch, with the latch high out of a child's reach.
- ❑ Always have rescue equipment, such as a shepherd hook or life preserver, by the pool.
- ❑ Keep a telephone by the pool with your local emergency number (usually 911) clearly posted.
- ❑ Learn basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Because of the time it might take for help to arrive in an emergency, your CPR skills can save your child's life. CPR performed by bystanders has been shown to improve outcomes in drowning victims.

## From Your Doctor



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