

Keeping Our Children Safe and Sound

Rona Renner, RN

Better safe than sorry.

We all want our children to live safe and sound. Since they'll be exposed to dangers as they grow, let's learn first aid. Some accidents are inevitable, yet let's remember: **observation** and **precaution**, for **prevention**. Some guidelines for child safety follow.

General Precautions:

- Keep emergency phone numbers at hand.
- Keep first aid materials at hand.
- Learn first aid and CPR.

Prevention of Asphyxiation and Strangulation:

- Always put babies to bed on their backs.
- Keep small objects out of the reach of children.
- Keep plastic bags and deflated or burst balloons away from children.
- Cut children's food in small pieces.
- Don't give spoonfuls of peanut butter to young children.
- Never leave children alone in the car.
- Avoid children getting trapped in armoires, trunks, washers, and dryers.
- Use security clips or other safety measures on Venetian blind cords.
- Avoid strings on young children's clothing and toys.

Prevention of Drowning:

- Always supervise children when in a bathtub, wading pool or swimming pool.
- Have fence and locked gate around swimming pool.
- Keep buckets and wading pools empty.
- Put a safety clip on toilet cover.

Prevention of Falls:

- Have sufficient lighting throughout the home.
- Keep floors dry.
- Secure carpets and rugs.
- Use rubber mats to avoid falls in bathtubs and showers.
- Keep electric cords away from foot traffic.
- Have handrails on stairwells.
- Use gates and barriers at the top and bottom of stairwells.
- Never leave babies alone on changing tables.
- Keep cribs, beds, and chairs away from windows.
- Put locks or bars on windows.

Prevention of Burns:

- Use UV protection when going outdoors.
- Keep matches, lighters, and cigarettes away from children.
- Have smoke alarms and fire extinguishers at home.
- Practice escape in case of fire.
- Teach children to stop, drop and roll if their clothing catches fire.
- Use covers on electric outlets.
- Keep electric appliances away from water.
- Keep hot liquids away from children.



- Have water temperature controls on faucets.
- Keep water heater at a maximum of 120°F.
- Keep hot appliances away from children.
- Put protective barriers in front of fireplaces, heaters, and ovens.

Prevention of Poisoning:

- Avoid contact with lead paint.
- Use childproof bottles.
- Keep poisonous plants away from children.
- Keep medicines, paints, make-up, pesticides, toiletries, cleaning, and gardening products out of the reach of children.

Prevention of Cuts and Serious Lesions:

- Never shake babies.
- Have children wear helmets when skating and riding bicycle.
- Always use car seats and safety belts when traveling by car.
- Use safe cribs, carrying seats, walkers, feeding chairs, strollers, playpens, and toys.
- Make sure that playgrounds are safe.
- Supervise contact with pets.
- Use corner and edge guards on furniture that is within the reach of young children.
- Keep sharp objects away from children.
- Keep firearms out of the reach of children.

Summer Safety:

- Never leave children alone in or near a pool, in the bathtub, or playing with a bucket of water. In the ocean, even good swimmers should swim with a buddy.
- Use sunscreen when going outdoors. The sun protection factor (SPF) should be at least 15-30. (www.aap.org/advocacy/archives/tanning.htm)
- When the temperature is hot, make sure children drink lots of water to prevent dehydration. The FDA suggests that you don't leave food out for more than an hour when it's above 90 degrees, and not more than two hours other times. Bring lots of ice and coolers to your picnics.
- Children should always wear a bike helmet. When you buy a helmet, look for a label that says the helmet meets the CPSC safety standard. Wear the helmet so that it's level on the head, not tipped forwards or backwards. Securely fasten the strap. Ask your Pediatrician about programs that can help you get good helmets at a reasonable price. (www.aap.org/family/bicycle.htm)