

# Kids Safety

GUIDE



# Burn Prevention

Every season brings the risk of a child being burned, be it campfire or grill, firecrackers, boiling water, fireplaces, stoves, candles or playing with matches or a lighter. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 300 children are treated in emergency rooms every day for burn-related injuries, while two children die.

Young children are more likely to get scalded by hot liquid or steam, and older children are at greater risk of injury from burns caused by direct contact with fire.

## TALK TO YOUR KIDS

Young children need to know to be careful around fire or hot items such as curling irons, the stove, candles and so forth. As they get older, talk to them about the stove (an electric burner can be hot, even if it doesn't look it), how to safely set off firecrackers, how to build a campfire and more. You don't want to scare them off from ever starting a fire; rather, you want them to know how to do it safely.

## BE VIGILANT WHEN KIDS ARE AROUND FIRE

Whenever fire is around — while at a barbecue, setting off firecrackers, lighting your fireplace or even cooking — keep young children at a safe distance.

The CDC recommends safe cooking practices, such as never leaving food unattended on the stove. Safe Kids Worldwide suggests using back burners if possible, or turning pan and pot handles toward the wall, so a child can't walk by and grab it, potentially tipping the hot contents onto themselves.



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## INSTALL AND REGULARLY CHECK SMOKE ALARMS

Your house should have smoke alarms on every floor and near all bedrooms. Test them once a month to ensure they are working. It's also

good to make a plan with your children, so they know what to do if the alarm sounds and they need to get out. Walk them through the best ways to get out of the house and identify a place

nearby to meet.

## CHECK THE WATER HEATER TEMPERATURE

According to Safe Kids Worldwide, set your water heater to the manufacturer's

recommended setting or, in lieu of that, 120 degrees Fahrenheit. This will keep water coming straight from the tap from being hot enough to accidentally scald a child.

# Drowning and Water Safety

**P**arents and guardians need to be extra vigilant around kids and water.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drowning is a leading cause of injury death for children 14 years old and younger. More children between 1 and 4 years old die of drowning than any other cause besides birth defects.

This doesn't mean you have to scrap your water fun. There are plenty of ways to keep kids safe around water, the CDC says.

## **PAY ATTENTION**

When your kids are around water, pay very close attention. A child can get into trouble around water quickly. If you have a pool at your house or are at a house with a pool, this is incredibly important. Even if you're not planning to swim, kids can get into the pool without a parent knowing. If you own a pool, keep it fenced, and have a self-closing, self-latching gate with a lock.

## **PREPARE CHILDREN FOR THE WATER**

Kids (and adults) should know how to float, dog paddle, move through the water and other ways to keep themselves afloat if they get into trouble. If you're going into natural bodies of water, such as lakes, rivers or the ocean,



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wear life jackets. Don't just have them on the boat; actually wear them, no matter how good a swimmer the wearer is. Life jackets or floating devices also are good in pools for younger children or weak swimmers.

## **KNOW THE SIGNS OF DROWNING AND HOW TO PERFORM CPR**

According to Slate magazine, most real-life drownings don't look like drownings on TV. People often aren't yelling

for help, splashing violently or waving to get attention. Look for these signs: head low in the water, with the mouth at water level; eyes glassy or closed; gasping for breath; not using their legs to push themselves up; trying to swim but

aren't able to; or trying to roll over onto their backs.

Parents, guardians and older children also should learn CPR so that if someone is in trouble, they can help keep the person alive until EMTs arrive.

# Playground Safety

It takes one fall off a swing or a slide for a fun day at the park to turn into an emergency room visit. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 200,000 children go to the ER for playground-related injuries every year.

These are injuries such as broken bones, concussions and traumatic brain injuries (about 20,000 each year), and that doesn't include the injuries that weren't serious enough to warrant a trip to the ER — scrapes, bruises, sprains and more.

But it doesn't mean you need to avoid your local playground. There are plenty of things you can do to help your child have fun at the park.

## WHERE AND HOW INJURIES HAPPEN

About two-thirds of traumatic brain injuries that happen on the playground involve monkey bars, climbing equipment or swings. In fact, on public playgrounds, more injuries all types occur on monkey bars and climbing equipment than on any other equipment. Well-maintained playgrounds also pose fewer risks, so make sure the equipment is in good condition and not rusty or falling apart.

## DRESSING FOR THE PLAYGROUND

This is more than dressing for the weather. Safe Kids Worldwide recommends taking off necklaces, scarves or clothes with drawstrings, which can get caught on equipment. If you biked to the park, take off helmets while using the playground.

## WHAT PARENTS AND GUARDIANS CAN DO

Your local playground likely is not an unsafe place for your children to play, and to ensure they have a good time, you can take some additional precautions as well. Find playgrounds that have soft mate-

rial underneath the equipment, such as wood chips, sand or mulch.

The CDC also recommends paying attention to what playground equipment is age appropriate for your children and ensuring they aren't playing up; also make sure they

are playing on the equipment as it is meant to be used. Make sure guardrails are in good condition, which can help prevent falls.

Also look for things in the playground that can trip a child, such as rocks or tree stumps.

## PAYING ATTENTION

Keep a close eye on your children. Younger kids especially need active supervision. Make sure they know playground rules and not to fight with other kids or even get too rowdy on the top of slides or climbing equipment.



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# Look Out for Poisoning Risks

**W**hen it comes to accidental poisoning, home is the most dangerous place to be.

According to Safe Kids Worldwide, 90 percent of poisonings occur at home, and a huge chunk of those happen to children.

Half of the 2 million calls to the poison control helpline in 2011 involved children who were younger than 6 years old who, in exploring, found cleaning and household products, medication and other common household items.

There are a number of things you can do to keep your kids away from such substances.

## CHILDPROOF YOUR HOUSE

People know to do this for babies that are starting to crawl, but until children are old enough to know what bleach is, store household products and cleaning solution out of children's sight and reach. This also includes laundry and dishwashing detergent. This makes the cupboard under the sink, a popular storage site, potentially dangerous in houses with young children. Relocate them to a utility or laundry room, a linen closet or the garage. You can also install



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cabinet locks on doors.

## LABEL AND PROPERLY STORE MEDICATION

Keep medications out of reach from children, and know what your medications can do so you can watch for signs if it appears children have gotten into the medicine cabinet. (This can be life-saving even with teenagers and older children in the house, as medica-

tion can be used in a suicide attempt.)

Also keep makeup, lotion, art supplies and alcohol behind closed doors or well out of reach of curious hands.

## DISPOSE OF POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES

Don't need the rest of that narcotics prescription? Don't keep it around the house.

Instead, find a safe way to dispose of it. You can do the same with over-the-counter drugs and even vitamins and supplements. If you don't like a cleaning product or have an almost-empty bottle sitting unused, the CDC recommends getting rid of it.

## OTHER SUBSTANCES TO WATCH OUT FOR

The National Capital Poison

Center, which offers help in identifying pills and determining if a person was likely poisoned, also warned about batteries, which, if swallowed, can burn through a child's esophagus in a matter of hours and lead to significant injury or death. Nickel-sized 20mm lithium coin cells are the most hazardous. E-cigarette vapor and carbon monoxide also can be threats in the home.



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# Car and Bike Safety

**A**ny time you get on the road with kids, be it in a car, on bikes or as a pedestrian, there are risks. According to the CDC, injuries from car accidents are the No. 1 cause of injury death for children ages 5 to 19. And half of the 515,000 bike-related injuries annually in the country are to children and adolescents.

## **MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS**

- Use a car seat or booster seat for young children. Make sure to get the right type of seat for your child's age, height and weight, and ensure it's installed in the car correctly. Do not put a rear-facing car seat in front of an active air bag. If you're not sure, check with your local health department, which may have

experts or events to help parents install their car seats.

- When children are big enough that a seat belt fits them, make sure they always wear it when the car is moving. They are big enough when the lap belt sits across the upper thigh, not the stomach, and the shoulder belt sits across the chest, not the neck. According to the CDC, 35 percent of children 12 years and

younger who died in a crash in 2015 were not buckled up.

- Put children in the middle of the back seat, which is the safest seat. Keep children in the back seat until age 12. An airbag can be fatal to a young child.

- Make sure kids know how to be safe when they're playing outside, crossing the street and otherwise interacting with vehicles as pedestri-

ans. Make sure they know to look both ways, to walk on the left side of the street against traffic so drivers can see them and to stay out of the street whenever possible.

## **BIKE SAFETY**

- Wear a helmet that fits properly. According to Safe Kids Worldwide, correctly worn helmets can reduce the risk of head injuries by close

to 45 percent.

- Ride on paved trails if possible and sidewalks if it's legal in your city. If you ride on the street, always ride on the right side of the road, in the direction of traffic, as far to the right as possible.

- Learn and use appropriate hand signals.

- Wear bright colors and reflectors on your clothing, and use lights if it's dark.

# Youth Sports Injuries

**Y**outh sports leagues are a great way for kids to get exercise and make friends. According to Safe Kids Worldwide, more than 46.5 million U.S. children participate in sports each year. Most do so without injury, but as with any physical activity, there are some risks.

One-third of children who play a team sport at some point suffer an injury that is serious enough to take time out from practice or games. Most of these injuries don't happen during games; rather, 62 percent of injuries happen during practice. The most common types of injuries are sprains, muscle strains, bone or growth plate injuries, repetitive motion injuries and heat-related illnesses. Additionally, girls have a much higher risk of ACL injuries.

However, this doesn't mean your kids can't safely participate in sports. There are a lot of steps parents and coaches can take to reduce the risk of injury and lessen the effects of injury when they do happen.

## **MAKE SURE KIDS ARE WEARING THE RIGHT PROTECTIVE GEAR**

This could be helmets and pads for football and hockey, shin guards in soccer, knee and elbow pads in volleyball, goggles in racquetball or whatever other equipment is recommended. This gear should be in good condition and fit properly and, especially with helmets, may need to be replaced if your child sustains a particularly hard hit.

## **UNDERSTAND THE RISK OF CONCUSSION**

Concussions and other head injuries are becoming an increasing risk in youth football. Talk to your child's coach or school leadership about what the team is doing to prevent concussions, both during practice and games, and that the coach or trainer knows to watch for signs of head injury and has a plan to take the child out and go through the necessary medical evaluations before allowing your child back into the game.

## **BE AWARE OF THE HEAT**

You don't have to be in 100-degree days for a child to be at risk of heat exhaustion. Parents and coaches should watch children closely, ensuring they are getting enough to drink, taking time to rest (including in the shade, if necessary) and that players are appropriately dressed for the weather. This is especially important in very hot or humid climates.

Sixty-two percent of injuries happen during practice. The most common types of injuries are sprains, muscle strains, bone or growth plate injuries, repetitive motion injuries and heat-related illnesses.



# Choking Hazards

Choking is among the leading causes of accidental death and injury for infants and children, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. Most of these incidents involve food, coins and toys, with more than 50 percent of those cases involving foods.

It's important to know what presents the greatest risk of choking and how you can protect your children.

## THE RISKS

You might be surprised at what young children can choke on. According to the AAP, choking hazards include:

- Coins and coin-sized lithium batteries.
- Buttons, pins, earrings, stones and tacks.
- Toys with small or removable parts.
- Toys small enough to fit entirely into a child's mouth.
- Small balls or marbles.
- Small hair bows, barrettes and rubber bands.
- Pen or marker caps.
- Refrigerator magnets or magnets found in children's games.
- Pieces of dog or cat food.
- Balloons or balloon pieces.
- Chewing gum or hard or sticky candy.
- Foods like grapes, hot dogs, raw carrots, peanuts, popcorn, chunks of meat or cheese, nuts and seeds.

Keep potential choking hazards off the floor and out of reach of young children. When buying toys, make sure to pick toys that are the right age group for your children, which are made according to safety standards that should protect against choking.



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## KEEP AN EYE OUT

Besides keeping potential choking hazards away from young children, keep a close eye on children while they're eating, and make sure the food pieces are cut small enough to not be a danger.

Kids shouldn't play, walk, run or lie down with their food in their mouths. Teach them to chew their food well and not eat too fast.

Learn the Heimlich maneuver so if a child does start choking, you know how to respond. These are different

for babies and young children than for older children, so make sure you know them both. If a child swallows a magnet, Safe Kids Worldwide recommends seeking immediate medical attention. Swallowing magnets can lead to abdominal pain, nausea,

vomiting and diarrhea.

In addition to choking hazards, be aware of other suffocation risks. Keep plastic bags out of reach of children and tie up the cords attached to window blinds, including moving cribs, beds and furniture away from the windows.