



Childproofing Your Home

Tips For Preventing Injury To Your Child

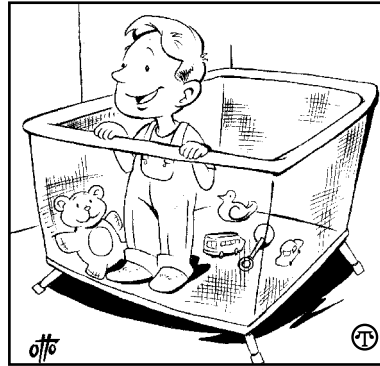
(NAPSA)—You want your home to be a safe haven for your children, but their simple curiosity may lead them to explore dangerous territory, even in their own homes. About 4.5 million children are injured in the home each year. Taking some simple, preventive measures could help keep their unbridled curiosity in check and prevent many of these injuries from occurring.

“Survey your home periodically to ensure that you have removed or alleviated as many hazards as possible,” said Wendy Lucid, MD, of the American College of Emergency Physicians. “Following some simple safety precautions could prevent many of the injuries children show up with in the emergency department. Childproofing your home is easy and inexpensive and, most importantly, could save your child’s life.”

You don’t need a professional to childproof your home. Much of the effort centers on making sure you and your family are aware of potential problems and making adjustments to minimize hazards. And while some safety devices should be used, most are inexpensive and are available from your local hardware or home store. Be sure to follow the instructions for the devices carefully.

ACEP recommends the following preventive measures to help reduce your child’s chance of injury in the home:

- Use safety latches and locks on cabinets and drawers.
- Buy all medicines with child-proof caps and always keep them closed.
- Keep lightweight plastic bags, such as dry cleaning bags, grocery bags, and packaging on clothes, out of reach of children.
- Check all toys for small parts that could be swallowed.
- Keep nightlights with small plastic bulbs out of reach of children.
- Make sure children can’t reach plants.
- Use a crib that meets the current standards and has a firm, tight-fitting mattress so that your child can not slip in between the crack and the crib side. Never place babies in adult beds, which puts them at risk for suffocation or strangulation.
- Install safety gates to prevent children from falling down



steps and keep them away from dangerous areas like the kitchen when you are cooking. Gates that screw to the wall are more secure than “pressure gates.”

- Use window guards and safety netting to help prevent falls from windows, balconies and landings. Window screens are not effective for preventing children from falling out of windows. (If window guards are used, ensure that at least one window in each room can easily be used in case of fire.)

- Tie all vertical blind cords up high and keep electrical cords out of reach, possibly by running them under a baseboard.

- Use bumpers to cushion corners and edges of coffee tables, the fireplace hearth and other low furniture.

- Install emergency releases on the outside of your bathroom and bedroom doors, or cover or remove locks, so children can not lock themselves in.

- Install outlet covers and outlet plates to help prevent electrocution.

- Set your water heater temperature to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to prevent burns from hot water.

- If you have a gun in the house, keep it unloaded and secured in a lockbox, or with a trigger lock. The ammunition should always be kept in a separate, secured location. Also ensure that children do not have access to the key.

“It is important to remember that no safety device or measure is completely childproof,” said Dr. Vinocur. “Stay alert—your child’s curiosity may be able to outsmart even the most clever safety devices and precautions.”

For more information about safety in your home, visit ACEP’s Web site at www.acep.org.