

Simple Tips can Keep Homes Safer for Children

Each year 3 million Kids are Injured at Home

Columbus, GA – Each year, more than 3 million kids ages 14 and under get hurt at home—and more than 2,000 children die from unintentional injuries in the home. Fire, suffocation, drowning, choking, firearm and poisoning are among the top leading causes of unintentional home injury death for this age group.

“Children spend a lot of time in the home and it’s a parent’s job to make sure that environment is as safe as possible,” says Christy Hubbard, Safe Kids Columbus Coordinator. “Safety devices like smoke alarms and window guards are important, but active supervision by an adult is also key to making sure children stay safe. Baby-proofing is only the first step. Injury risks change as children grow and develop and parents should reassess the safety of their home to address the most serious risks.”

Safe Kids Columbus recommends parents keep these home safety tips in mind:

Preventing Fires & Burns

- Make sure you have working smoke alarms in every level of your home, outside each sleeping area and in every bedroom. Test the alarms every month and replace the batteries once a year.
- Set your water heater at 120 degrees and test the bathwater with your wrist or elbow before putting your child in it.

Around Water

- Always supervise children near water. Never leave young children alone in the bathtub or pool – a child can drown in a matter of seconds.
- Keep toilet lids closed and lock all doors to bathrooms.
- Safeguard your pools and hot tubs by making sure your pool has four-sided fencing and a self-closing, self-latching gate. Hot tubs should be covered and locked when not in use.
- Install protection to prevent entrapment if you own a pool or hot tub, such as protective measures like anti-entrapment drain covers and safety vacuum release systems.

Around the Home

- Prevent serious falls by keeping furniture away from windows, installing guards or stops on windows that are not emergency exits, and installing safety gates at the top and the bottom of stairs if you have small children. Never use baby walkers and always use protective surfaces beneath playground equipment.
- Lay your baby on his or her back to sleep on a crib that meets all current national safety standards. Remove all pillows, comforters, stuffed toys and other soft products from the crib before putting your baby to sleep.
- While looking at a room as your child would, ask yourself what looks interesting and what can be reached. Get rid of small items your child can choke on.
- Keep guns locked, unloaded and where kids cannot reach them. Lock up ammunition in a separate place.

Preventing Poisonings

- Lock up poisons such as medicine, vitamins, cleaning supplies and pet food. Read labels and follow directions when giving medicine to children.
- Make sure you have working carbon monoxide detectors in every sleeping area and on each level of your home. Test them every month and make sure heating systems are vented outside and checked each year.

Be Prepared for Emergencies

- Be prepared for emergencies and keep emergency numbers by every telephone.

- Call 911 if your child is choking, collapses, can't breathe or is having a seizure.
- Check your first aid kit to make sure it is fully stocked.
- Make sure babysitters and other caregivers know where to find first aid supplies and how to handle an emergency.

For more information about your local coalition activities, visit www.safekidscolumbusga.com. Safe Kids Columbus works to prevent accidental childhood injury, the leading killer of children 14 and under. Its members include public safety agencies, teachers, EMTs, county commissioners, health educators, nurses, civic groups, faith-based organizations, public health organizations, local government, and many others concerned about the well being of our children. Safe Kids Columbus is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing accidental injury. Safe Kids Columbus was founded in 1998 and is led by the Columbus Health Department.

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