Wellness Program — Child Safety Tips

Accidents happen. With children, accidents seem to happen in bunches. Spilled milk aside, accidents claim the lives of nearly 300 children under the age of four every month in the United States.

Children are at special risk for falls, poisons, burns, firearm injuries, and car accidents. Children’s innocence and bright-eyed curiosity can also lead them into dangerous situations that are not accidents, such as abductions.

The good news is that you can reduce the risks for your child by following some simple guidelines.

Keep your child out of harm’s way
Children have a way of following their curiosity wherever it leads them. Sometimes it can lead them to places where they may get hurt, such as stairways, driveways, windows, and into the street.

Here are some ways to keep your little explorer out of harm’s way:
• Lock any doors leading to dangerous areas.
• Use gates on stairways.
• Install window guards on all windows above the first floor.
• Have your children play in a fenced yard or a playground.
• Before you back out of the driveway, know your child’s location; be sure your child is not behind the car.

Always buckle up
Although every state requires that infants and small children ride in a safety seat, car accidents remain the leading cause of death among children under the age of five in the United States. Even car accidents at slow speeds can cause serious injuries to your child, as can sudden stops and near misses.

The best way to protect your child is to use a car safety or booster seat every time your child is in the car, until he or she is big enough to use a seat belt. Be sure to follow the instructions included with your car seat for proper installation and positioning.

Shield your child from burns
Though they may be eager to help with the cooking, young children should be kept out of the kitchen. The kitchen is the site of many burn injuries; children are at greater risk because their skin is more sensitive to heat. It’s best to find an activity away from the kitchen that will keep your child occupied while you are cooking.

To prevent hot liquids, grease, or food from splattering on little ones, use the back burners on the stove with the pot handles turned inward, out of your child’s reach. Keep hot foods and liquids away from children, in the center of the table.

Remember, kitchen appliances, as well as other hot surfaces such as irons and heaters, can stay hot enough to burn your child long after you’ve finished using them. The same holds true for your hot water heater. To protect your child from scalds, do not let the thermostat exceed 120 degrees. Be sure to keep the water control gauge covered and always check the water temperature before bathing your child.

If your child does get burned, remove any clothing, treat the burned area immediately with cold water, cover the burn loosely with a bandage or clean cloth, and call your doctor immediately.

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Protect your home and family from fire
The kitchen is also where many fires start. That's why you should keep a fire extinguisher and smoke detector in your kitchen. In fact, it's a good idea to install a smoke detector on every floor of your house. Test the batteries every month and make it a habit to change the batteries every year on your child's birthday.

Store matches and lighters where children can't get them, preferably in a locked drawer. In the event of a fire, make sure your family has an escape plan to get out of the house quickly and safely. Do not attempt to put the fire out yourself; get your family out of the home and call 911 immediately.

Keep poisons out of reach
Of the more than one million accidental poisonings that occur in the United States each year, almost two-thirds involve children. Pills, medicines, household chemicals, and other poisonous materials can be swallowed by children and should be kept out of their reach.

When it comes to these materials, you should use only what is absolutely necessary. Throw away old medications. Keep what you must use safely capped and out of sight and reach of your little ones. Use drawer and door guards where household chemicals are stored.

If your child does put something poisonous in his or her mouth, call your doctor or local poison control center immediately. Program the poison control center number into your phone or place the number near your phone for quick access. Always keep syrup of ipecac on hand (available from your local pharmacy). This will make your child vomit, but do not use it unless told to do so by your doctor or the poison control center.

Prevent choking
Choking is responsible for the death of more children under the age of six than any other home accident. Everything from toy parts to food can get stuck in a child's throat and block breathing passages.

Make sure you pick up all small objects lying around the house, including coins, paper clips, pins, plastic wrappers—anything that children can fit into their mouths. Remove loose parts from toys, such as eyes and buttons from dolls, before your child does. Throw out broken toys.

Food and medicines can be just as dangerous as other household objects. Check with your doctor to see at what age it is safe to feed your child foods such as popcorn, peanuts, grapes, and hard candy. Cut food into small pieces—even hot dog chunks have been known to be a frequent cause of child choking.

Keep guns under lock and key
Guns and children can make for a tragic combination. While many people buy guns to protect their families, research suggests that keeping guns out of the home is a safer alternative. Children living in a household where a gun is present are more likely to be shot accidentally by someone they know than by an intruder.

If you must keep a gun in the house, keep it unloaded, locked away, and separate from ammunition.

Cushion their falls
A trapeze artist wouldn't walk a tightrope without a safety net. Nor should your child's acrobatics be performed without a soft surface underneath. About 75 percent of playground injuries, including on play equipment at home, are caused by falls. To absorb the impact of falls from play equipment, such as swings and jungle gyms, use a rubber mat, sand, saw dust, or wood chips (to a depth of one foot) below.
Teach your child rules for safety
By teaching some simple rules of safety, you can better protect your child. Visit the website of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, www.missingkids.com, for valuable information on protecting the safety of your child. The site offers many free safety publications that you can download and print.

### Child Identification Record

| First Name | Middle Name | Last Name | Nickname(s) | Address | City, State, Zip | Home Phone | Alternative Phone | Date of Birth | Ethnicity | Gender | Eye Color | Hair Color | Blood Type | Height | Weight | Year |
|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|---------|-----------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------|--------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|--------|------|
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Other Identifying Characteristics

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Fingerprints

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PRINT THIS BROCHURE AND IDENTIFICATION RECORD TO KEEP IN A SECURE, EASILY ACCESSIBLE LOCATION.