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*"Practice Limited to Pediatrics"*

## **Home Safety Tips**

### **Babies**

Innocent, naturally inquisitive and into everything, are especially vulnerable to injury from accidents in the home. That's why it's important for concerned parents to try and learn how accidents are most likely to occur and take precautions to minimize the risk of injury to baby. Even so, no matter how careful parents may be a 100% perfectly safe, accident free home is not possible. For this reason, never leave a baby unattended, even in the most carefully baby proofed environment.

These tips will identify some of the more common hazards in the home. Since every house is different, every hazard can't be pointed out here. Of course, no list could do that. Use common sense and professional advice to identify and resolve hazards that go beyond the scope of this list.

### **In the Kitchen**

- Poisons or toxic materials should not be under the sink. Place them high up out of baby's reach.
- Install latches on all drawers and cabinets which might contain items that can harm baby (*kitchen, bathrooms, etc.*)
- When cooking, all pot handles should be turned inward so baby can not reach them. Use back burners whenever possible. Hint: To remind yourself (*or your forgetful spouse or babysitter*) to use the back burners, store the grills for the front burners in a drawer or cabinet.
- Stove knobs that are within baby's reach should be baby proofed. Gas ranges are particularly dangerous because you may not be aware of the baby running on the gas slightly.
- Magnets on refrigerators are not a good idea. If they fall to the floor, they may break or the magnet can fall off and baby will pick it up and swallow it. Business card type magnets are okay because they can't break or magnets can't come loose if they fall and they are too big to choke on.
- Wash out cleaning bottles before recycling them ...just a drop cleaning fluid can cause serious injury to a baby.

### **In the Bathroom**

- Do not take pills or medication in front of the children. They mimic what they see. Never refer to medicine as candy.
- Do not rely on any medicine cabinet locks for protection. The best thing to do is buy a fishing tackle box or a tool box so you can put all medications inside and lock the box.
- Remove all soaps, razors and shampoos from around the edge of the bathtub.
- The bathtub spout can be covered with a spout cover, preventing the child from burning themselves or slamming their head against it and causing injury.
- For obvious reasons, do not get out of the bathtub while carrying your baby.
- Toilet lids should be locked closed.
- Never leave an infant alone in the tub. Ignore telephone calls and doorbells. Babies can drown in just one inch or two of water. Also, never leave a tub with water in it.
- If you use an automatic toilet bowl cleaner, remove it from the tank and discard it in the outside trash; such products are toxic.
- Make sure bathroom doors can be unlocked from the outside in case your child locks one from within. If necessary, change the locks.

## In the Nursery

- All busy boxes, mirrors, or any type of crib attachment should be installed on the wall side of the crib...otherwise, the attachment can be used by baby to climb up and out of the crib.
- Wall hangings should never be put above a crib. If a child were to pull it down, nails could come loose and fall into the crib.
- Mobiles should be removed when the baby is 5-7 months old. Baby can pull the mobile down, or the little strings from the mobile can be wrapped around the baby's fingers and cause injury.
- When changing the baby, always use the changing strap and never leave the baby unattended on the changing table, not even for a few seconds. Don't underestimate baby's ability to wriggle or roll.
- Don't forget to protect any electrical outlets that may be behind the crib. Baby can reach through the bars.

## Around the House

- Cover electrical outlets to prevent access by the baby.
- Install Plexiglas on stair and balcony railings where baby might squeeze through.
- Keep all trash containers locked up and out of way. Remove plastic bags used as liners from containers and diaper pails which baby might tear a piece from and choke on.
- Tall lamps or coat racks can be pulled over onto baby or through windows. These should be removed or blocked by furniture to prevent baby from getting to them.
- Turn your hot water heater down to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or lower to lessen the chance of accidental burns.
- Separate plants and babies. Some plants are poisonous. Baby can also pull leaves or stems off and choke on them or pull the whole plant on top of them.
- Hanging cords from answering machines, phones, lamps and appliances should be out of baby's reach.
- Do not use tacks or staples to secure electrical cords to walls. They can fall or be pulled out and swallowed.
- Discard plastic dry cleaner bags before entering the home. Baby can pull pieces off and choke on them.
- Keep emergency phone numbers, including poison control center, near a telephone.
- To prevent carpeting from sliding underneath feet, use foam grid below the carpet.
- Tips from doorstops can be pulled off by babies and swallowed. To prevent that, get a safe replacement door stopper or get some glue, place it inside the cap and stick the cap back onto the door stopper.
- Wicker and babies don't mix. Wicker can be picked off and put into their mouths.
- If you have exposed brick or stone on your fireplace, purchase a custom-made bumper or place a piece of carpet or foam on the whole base, and that will prevent your child from banging into the brick.
- Tablecloths hanging over edges of tables can be pulled down and anything on top will surely fall on baby.
- Remove gas jet key from fireplace and put it out of reach so baby does not accidentally turn on gas, which, if on, could explode in the home.
- Exercise equipment and babies are not a good idea. They can get their fingers stuck in the spokes of exercise bikes or put fingers in gears, or the can pull weights onto themselves. You need to keep the two separated.
- Glass panels in coffee tables can break under the weight of the baby. Remove the table or replace the glass with Plexiglas.
- Cords to blinds should be lifted high and out of reach of baby or shortened. Baby can pull cord or accidentally wrap it around their neck or fingers or wrist.
- If you have any animals in the home, you should separate animal's food from the baby. It's best to feed animals in another room or part of the house so your baby cannot get at the pet's food.
- If you use disposable baby bottle liners don't forget to tear the plastic tabs off before feeding baby the bottle. Baby can tear the tabs off, put them in their mouth and choke on them.
- Dog doors or cat doors should be blocked off so baby does not go through the door. Baby will follow animals outside.
- Keep dangerous objects away from the edges of tables and counter tops where baby might reach up and grab them.
- And, most important of all,

**NEVER LEAVE A BABY UNATTENDED, THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR SUPERVISION**



