

# Infant Safety

## *Precautions you can take to make your home safer*

## You & Your Child

Infants do not know what is safe and what is not safe. You must protect your baby from accidents at home.

Home accidents are common. Each year, more children die because of accidents in the home than from all childhood diseases combined, according to the U.S. Consumer Protection Safety Commission.

For infants, danger lurks in just about every room. Babies are hurt in falls. They choke on things they put into their mouths. They may swallow household cleaners and other poisons. They are accidentally burned on stoves and by electrical outlets. Some drown in tubs.

Dangers are also found outside. Decks are dangerous, especially for babies who crawl.

If you spend a little time to take some simple precautions, you can make your home a safer place for your baby.

### **On Back**

**How to make your home safer for your baby.**

A publication of the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development made possible with help from the Frank and Theresa Caplan Fund For Early Childhood Development and Parenting Education.

For more Parenting Guides and other information, visit the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development on the Internet at [www.pitt.edu/~ocdweb/familyissues/guides](http://www.pitt.edu/~ocdweb/familyissues/guides)

**You & Your Child** may be reproduced for non-profit use only.



# Precautions you can take to make your home safer

Take the time to tour every room in your home. Look for safety hazards and take steps to eliminate them.

## **Kitchen**

- Do not allow your baby to roam the kitchen. If you have older children, do not allow them to play in the kitchen.
- Never leave a baby or young child in the kitchen unsupervised.
- Put safety latches on all cabinets, especially those that contain cleaning products or sharp objects like knives or forks.
- Keep the local poison information center telephone number near the phone.
- Move all small magnets on the refrigerator to an area that babies cannot reach so they won't put them in their mouths.
- If you let your child play with pots and pans, remove glass cookware and cookware with sharp objects from the cabinet.
- With older children, warn them not to hide in large appliances.
- Do not use a microwave to heat baby food or formulas. Microwaves can cause hot pockets in food which can burn baby's mouth.
- Use a child-resistant trash can or keep trash behind a locked cabinet. Trash bags should be kept in a cabinet with a child safety latch.
- Always use a highchair with a seat belt and crotch strap to guard against your child falling out. Keep the highchair out of reach of walls, tables, and counters.
- Do not leave a child unattended in a highchair.

## **Bathroom**

- Never leave your baby unattended in the tub.
- Keep the lid of the toilet down.
- Unplug all electrical appliances.
- Keep medicines out of reach or in a cabinet with a safety latch. Do the same with cotton swabs, scissors, razors, glass bottles.

## **Other rooms**

- Remove all objects from low tables. Do not allow climbing on tables.
- Make sure lamps are sturdy.
- Be careful with rocking chairs. They can pinch a crawling baby's fingers and toddlers can trip over the runners.
- Bolt tall bookcases and dressers to the wall to prevent them from falling over.
- Keep television sets and stereos out of the reach of babies and young children.
- Keep babies away from open windows. Do not place furniture near windows.

## **Stairs**

- Guard stairs with a gate.
- Do not use an accordion-style gate. Children can get their heads stuck in the v-shaped and diamond-shaped openings.
- Be careful with gates with vertical slats. The slats should be close enough so that your child's head cannot fit between two slats.

## **Bedroom**

- Crib rails should be close enough so that baby's head won't slip between them. Remove toys from crib and fluffy bedding, such as fluffy blankets and pillows.
- Make sure the changing table is sturdy enough to hold a baby.
- Never leave a child unattended on the changing table.

## **Yard**

- Check the slats on decks, fences, and gates. The slats should be close enough so that your child's head cannot fit between two slats.
- Never leave a child alone near a swimming pool.

