

Raising Safe Kids: One Stage at a Time



Babies (0 to 12 mos.)

Babies are vulnerable to many injury hazards because of their innate curiosity, small size and lack of physical coordination and cognitive abilities.

Did you know that babies...?

- Have a slower digestion rate than adults
- Breathe more quickly than adults, which puts them at a higher risk of inhaling harmful gasses faster
- Have been observed making 10 hand-to-mouth movements per hour
- Have thinner and more sensitive skin that can burn in approximately 1/4 of the time it takes to burn an adult's skin

What can you do?

To keep your baby safe, you need to actively supervise! As a parent, it's your responsibility to create a safe environment for your baby. While you can't protect your baby from every bump, bruise or scrape, you can lower the risk that your child will be seriously hurt.

Prevent falls

- Install stair gates.
- Secure furniture to the wall.
- Don't leave your baby unattended on changing tables, beds or other furniture.

Prevent poisonings

- Read labels and follow proper dosages when giving medicines to your baby.
- Lock up poisons out of sight and reach.
- Use child-resistant packages.
- Learn the Poison Control number: 1-800-222-1222.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms.

Prevent burns

- Set your water heater at 120 degrees or lower.
- Don't hold your baby while cooking or carrying hot foods and liquids.
- Never microwave your baby's bottle.

Visit www.usa.safekids.org for more information.



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Little Kids (1 to 4 yrs.)

Children at this age are beginning to get a sense of independence and are exploring their surroundings more. Their physical development and increased mobility is both a positive and a negative when it comes to injury. Remember that young children are curious but lack basic decision-making skills.

Did you know that little kids...?

- Like to imitate older playmates and may go beyond their own physical abilities
- Want to role play adult activities and use adult tools and objects
- Are much more likely to get hurt at a playground when they play on equipment designed for older kids
- Breathe more quickly than adults and their lungs are still developing
- Have thinner skin that burns more deeply and quickly at lower temperatures than adult's skin
- Are more likely to start fires with matches, lighters and other heat sources

What can you do?

Limit access to hazards. As your child grows from a baby to a toddler to a preschooler, one of the most effective ways to prevent an injury is to keep hazards away from him/her, when it's possible.

Prevent falls

- Install stair gates.
- Don't put toys or other attractive items on top of furniture.
- Place furniture away from windows and secure it to the wall.
- Actively supervise your child when he/she is on a playground.
- Make sure your child plays on age-appropriate playground equipment. Look for a playground that has 12 inches of shredded rubber, hardwood fiber/mulch or fine sand below the equipment.

Prevent fire injuries and burns

- Install and test smoke alarms.
- Practice an escape plan with your child.
- Lock up matches and lighters out of their sight and reach and teach your child not to play with them.
- Set your water heater at 120 degrees or lower.
- Make the stove area a "kid-free" zone.
- Cook with pots and pans on back burners and turn handles away from the front when cooking.
- Place hot foods and liquids in the center of the table, instead of on the edge.

Prevent poisonings

- Use child-resistant packages.
- Lock up poisons out of their sight and reach.
- Keep products in their original containers.
- Don't call medicine "candy."
- Install carbon monoxide alarms.

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Big Kids (5 to 9 yrs.)

Your growing child is exploring the world on foot or on a bike and may be taking bigger risks. While the occasional skinned knee or twisted ankle is a normal part of childhood, serious injuries shouldn't be. Big kids are experiencing fast development, both physically and mentally. Their decision-making skills are improving and peer pressure becomes a significant factor in injury risk.

Did you know that big kids...?

- Have less coordination for pedaling, more trouble recognizing and avoiding obstacles and lack adults' hand-eye coordination abilities
- Are at higher risk for cooking-related scald injuries, especially from tableware and microwave ovens
- Have lungs that are still developing
- Are less likely to wake up if a smoke alarm sounds while they're sleeping

What can you do?

Teach your child about injury risks and prevention steps. Big kids look to you for guidance, even if it doesn't always seem like it.

Prevent motor vehicle injuries

- Talk to them about the need to use a booster seat for a correct seat belt fit.
- Walk all the way around your car before getting in.
- Never leave your child alone in a car.

Prevent recreational injuries

- Teach them to wear a helmet and protective gear every time they bike, ski, skateboard, skate or ride a scooter.
- Model safe behaviors.
- Provide them safe places to play. Look for a playground that has 12 inches of shredded rubber, hardwood fiber/mulch or fine sand below the equipment.
- Teach them proper playground behavior: no pushing, shoving or crowding.

Prevent fire injuries and burns

- Practice an escape plan with them.
- Install and test smoke alarms.
- Lock up matches and lighters and teach children not to play with them.
- Set your water heater at 120 degrees or lower.
- Don't let them use a microwave until they're tall enough to reach the items in it safely and understand that steam can burn.
- Place hot foods and liquids on the center of the table.

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Pre-teens (10 to 14 yrs.)

During these years, pre-teens struggle for independence, control and acceptance. They're not often supervised by adults and their risk-taking behavior and perception of invincibility and immortality put them at risk for injury.

Did you know that pre-teens...?

- Still have less ability to avoid obstacles and prevent falls than older children
- Have visual perception less defined than that of older children, lacking the ability to recognize an object from within a busy background. This is an important skill to have in order to identify oncoming cars in busy intersections.
- Are more concerned with how they're perceived and are influenced by their peers.
- Are most likely to be injured by cooking equipment-related fires or candle fires
- Have the highest fireworks injury rate
- Are more likely to be completely unrestrained in a car than younger children

What can you do?

Empower your pre-teen to make safer choices. Now that your child is older, your job as a parent is to help him/her understand the importance of safety.

Prevent motor vehicle injuries

- Set a good example. Always buckle up and make sure that everyone wears the appropriate restraints.
- Once they pass the Safety Belt Fit Test, teach them to wear a seat belt every time.
- Talk to them about car safety and teach them to use a booster seat and seat belt in a back seat on every ride, whether or not you're there.

Prevent recreational injuries

- Don't negotiate helmet use. Make sure they wear a helmet and protective gear every time they bike, skate, ski, skateboard or ride a scooter.
- Set a good example. Wear the right safety gear and obey signals.

Prevent fire injuries

- Practice an escape plan with your pre-teen.
- Make sure they never use candles in the bedroom.
- Teach them not to play with matches, lighters or fireworks.

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