

# Preventing Accidental Injuries in Children

## Car Safety

- Use a car seat or booster seat until your child is at least nine years old.
- Children should sit in the back seat until they are 13 years old.
- Never drive after drinking alcohol or taking drugs.
- Never use your cell phone while driving.
- More information: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (<http://www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/CPS>)

## Poisoning

- If you think your child has swallowed something dangerous, don't give them syrup of ipecac to make them throw up. Call 911 or the National Capital Poison Center (1-800-222-1222) right away.
- Don't put medicines in another container, and never refer to them as candy.
- Get rid of unused medicines, and store all medicines somewhere your child can't reach them.
- More information: National Capital Poison Center (<http://www.poison.org>)

## Safe Sleep

- Babies should sleep on their backs until they're one year old.
- Don't bring your baby into your own bed to sleep.
- Your baby's crib should be in your bedroom for the first six to 12 months.

- Remove all toys, stuffed animals, blankets, and pillows from the crib.
- More information: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (<https://www.cpsc.gov/SafeSleep>)

## Drowning

- If you have a pool, make sure it is fenced. A fence that blocks the pool from the house and the rest of the yard is best.
- Make sure your flotation devices are approved by the U.S. Coast Guard. (<https://www.dco.uscg.mil/CG-ENG-4/PFDSel/>)
- Enroll your child in swimming lessons by the time they're four years old. Children as young as 12 months may be able to take lessons. Talk to your doctor to see what age they recommend.
- Learn CPR. If you have older children, sign them up for a CPR class too. (<https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/cpr/cpr-training/cpr-classes>)

## Fire Safety

- Keep a fire extinguisher in your house.
- Install smoke detectors and check them regularly to make sure they're working.
- Make a home fire escape plan. Practice with your family so that your child knows what to do if a fire happens.

*continues*



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS

This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <https://familydoctor.org>.

This information provides a general overview and may not apply to everyone. Talk to your family doctor to find out if this information applies to you and to get more information on this subject. Copyright © 2020 American Academy of Family Physicians. Individuals may photocopy this material for their own personal reference, and physicians may photocopy for use with their own patients. Written permission is required for all other uses, including electronic uses.

## Preventing Accidental Injuries in Children *(continued)*

- Don't keep matches and lighters where children can reach them.
- Don't smoke or allow others to smoke in your house.
- More information: National Fire Protection Association (<http://www.nfpa.org> and <http://www.sparky.org>)
- Teach your child about the dangers of climbing on things.
- Don't set your baby's car seat or bouncer on raised surfaces.
- Don't change your child's diapers on raised surfaces.

### Gun Safety

- Don't keep guns in your house.
- If you do have a gun in your house, keep it unloaded, locked up, and somewhere your child can't reach it. Store ammunition in a different place, also locked up.

### Falls

- Don't let your child use a walker unless your doctor recommends it for special needs.

### Bicycle, Skateboard, and Scooter Safety

- Make sure your child wears a helmet when bicycling, skateboarding, or riding a scooter.
- Make sure your child wears elbow and wrist pads when skateboarding.
- Set a good example by wearing a helmet and other safety equipment yourself.
- Check your child's bike regularly for brake problems or loose parts.

October 2020