

Keeping Kids Safe



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Every parent wants their child to be safe and grow up happy and healthy.

Children change as they grow and develop new skills. This puts them at risk for injuries such as falls, burns, poisoning and drowning.

There are many things that parents and caregivers can do to prevent injuries.

This resource contains information on child development, the role of supervision and easy things you can do to make your home safe for your child.

**Check out the home safety
checklist on page 14!**

Growth & Development



Babies and young children are more likely to be injured in the home than any other age group. They grow and learn new skills quickly and that puts them at risk for injuries.

It is normal for children to want to explore their home but they may not be able to understand dangers that can cause them to be injured. Knowing the ages and stages that your child may learn new skills will help you to make changes in your home before your child is at risk.

As your child grows and learns to do new things, how to keep him or her safe changes too.

For example, as soon as a baby learns how to roll for the first time, they can fall off of a surface if you are not holding on to them.

Look at your home through your child's eyes. Think about what could make them curious, what they can reach for, climb on, or get into.

At any stage of development, both supervision and changes to your home will help to keep your child safe.



Supervision

Supervision is the best way to prevent child injuries.

Supervision

Supervision means watching your child, removing them from danger and teaching them about risks.

Although it is a challenge to watch your child at all times, **supervision is the best way to prevent child injuries.** Being aware of where your child is and what they are doing can help you to prevent an injury.

Supervision is more than just being near your child. Even when you are close to your child you can become distracted.

Common distractions include:

- Texting or talking on your phone
- Playing games on your phone or tablet
- Watching TV
- Making meals, cleaning or doing laundry



In situations when you will be distracted, have your child with you and give them something to do that will keep their attention, such as:

- Have your child colour or draw a picture while you are on the phone or cooking
- Have your child pick all of the socks out of the basket while you are doing laundry

If you are doing something that requires your full attention, it may be best to do it when your child is sleeping, or while another adult is watching them.



Child Falls

Prevent falls by making small changes to your home.

Supervision

Supervision to prevent falls means removing your child from danger. You could pick your toddler up from the edge of the stairs and say “this is not a safe place to play because you could get hurt”.

Did you know?

Falls are the top reason Ontario children aged 0-9 end up in the hospital.

Common ways your child can fall are:

- Jumping on the bed, couch or other furniture
- Playing on the stairs
- Climbing on furniture

Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs. The top gate should be wall-mounted.



Tip: remove items that may tempt children to climb high furniture or shelving (e.g. toys, TV remote).

Keep crib and other furniture away from windows and use window guards so windows can't open more than 10 cm (4 inches). Window screens do not prevent children from falling.





Secure furniture to the wall as it can tip over on your child (e.g. bookshelf, dresser and TV).

Keep one hand on your baby while he or she is on the change table and have clothing and supplies within reach.



Use safety straps when your child is in a high chair, swing, bouncy chair and stroller.



Child Burns

Prevent burns by making small changes in your home.

Supervision

Supervision to prevent a burn means being aware of when your child is near hot things. If you are making or drinking a hot drink, put your baby down in a safe spot away from the hot liquid.



Set your hot water temperature to 49 °C or 120 °F.

Did you know?

The most common way that children under 5 years are burned is from being scalded when they pull a hot drink, hot water or hot food down over themselves.

Common ways your child can be burned are:

- When you are holding a hot drink in your hand
- When there are hot pots on the stove
- When there is hot bathwater running

Keep hot drinks away from your child.



Tip:
Use a travel mug with a lid when drinking hot liquids.



Place pots on the back burners and turn pot handles towards the back of the stove.

Install working smoke alarms on each level of your home and near sleeping areas.



Keep matches, lighters and candles out of sight and reach of your child.



Install a screen* or gate* around your fireplace.

*Remember these can still become hot. Always supervise your child near your fireplace.

Child Poisoning

Prevent poisoning by making small changes in your home.

Supervision

Supervision to prevent poisoning means being aware of when your child is near poisonous items. There are times that you may need to use poisonous items around your home. During these times, keep the items out of reach of your child; keep lids on tight and return items to their locked cupboard right after use.

Did you know?

Children are at a higher risk for poisoning than any other age group. Medication is the leading cause of poisoning in children.

There are times when your child may be more at risk of coming in contact with poisonous items.

Common ways your child can be poisoned are:

- When you take your medications
- When you clean the house
- When you do your laundry



Put medications (including vitamins) and edible cannabis products out of reach of children such as in a high, locked cupboard.

Children may think medications or edible cannabis products look like candy or baked treats, and can find ways to open childproof pill bottles.

Keep cleaning products and other poisonous household items locked away and out of reach of children.



Tip: Look for the poison symbol on products to help you to know if it can hurt a child.



Keep poisonous plants out of reach of children.



Keep the Ontario Poison Centre phone number in an easy to find place. You can call 24 hours a day. They can tell you about what products are poisonous and how to keep your child safe.



**1 800 268 9017[®]
416 813 5900**

**Ontario Centre
Poison Anti-Poison
Centre de l'Ontario**

Child Drowning

Prevent drowning by making small changes in and around your home.

Supervision

Supervision to prevent drowning means being aware of when your child is near water. Keep your baby in your arms when they are in the water and keep your young child within arm's reach when they are in or near the water.

If you are not able to be within arm's reach of your child near the water, remove them from that area. Explain that "this is not a safe place to be because you might fall into the water".

Did you know?

Drowning is the second most common cause of death for children under 5 years of age.

A young child can drown in as little as 2.5 cm (1 inch) of water in just seconds.

Common ways your child can drown are:

- In backyard pools
- In the bathtub
- In lakes or ponds

Tip: Empty kiddie pools when not in use and empty rain barrels that do not have lids.



Tip: Keep toilet lids down





Never rely on bath rings or seats to keep your baby safe.

If you are at a home with a pool, your child could get out of the house and fall into the pool. Backyard pools need to have fencing around all four sides and have self-closing, self-latching gates.



Keep your child within arm's reach if they are near any water source in your yard, such as ponds, rain barrels and buckets.



Swimming lessons, water wings and lifejackets do not replace the need for supervising your child near or in water.



Child Home Safety Checklist

Every parent wants their child to be safe and grow up happy and healthy. You can make small changes in your home to keep your child safe. This checklist will give you tips on how to make your home safer for your child.

Bathroom

Prevent falls

- ❑ Keep floors dry and free from spills
- ❑ Use only non-slip, mats with rubber backing in your home

Prevent burns

- ❑ Finish filling the tub before you put your child in the water
- ❑ Turn off the hot water tap before the cold water because it leaves the faucet cold
- ❑ Test the bathwater to make sure it is not too hot, before you place your child in the tub
- ❑ Store curling irons/hair tools and razors out of reach of children

Prevent poisoning

- ❑ Keep medications locked up and out of reach of children
- ❑ Keep cleaning products locked up and out of reach of children

Prevent drowning

- ❑ Close the bathroom door, even when not in use
- ❑ Keep the toilet lid down or latched
- ❑ Empty the bathwater right after use

Bedroom

Prevent falls

- ❑ Only allow children over 6 to use the top bed of a bunkbed

- ❑ Keep furniture away from windows
- ❑ Keep windows and patio doors locked
- ❑ Keep diaper change items within reach of change table
- ❑ Keep children's favourite items on low shelves where they can reach them
- ❑ Make sure your child does not jump on the bed or other furniture

Kitchen

Prevent falls

- ❑ Keep your child from climbing up on the kitchen table or counter

Prevent burns

- ❑ Keep kettles, hot foods and liquids at the back of the counter
- ❑ Place your child in a safe spot while you are cooking or drinking hot drinks
- ❑ Use mugs with lids when you are having hot drinks
- ❑ Cook on the back burners of the stove and turn pot handles inward
- ❑ Cool hot food before feeding it to your child

Prevent poisoning

- ❑ Keep cleaning products locked up and out of reach of children
- ❑ Load and unload the dishwasher when your child is not nearby

General Home Safety

Prevent falls

- ❑ Move furniture away from windows
- ❑ Secure furniture like a bookcase or TV to the wall
- ❑ Install stair gates at top and bottom of all staircases in the home
- ❑ Keep children from jumping on furniture
- ❑ Keep doors and windows leading to balconies closed and locked

Prevent burns

- ❑ Set water heater temperature at 49°C or 120°F
- ❑ Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and near sleeping areas
- ❑ Place fire screens or gates around fireplaces

Prevent poisoning

- ❑ Remove or keep poisonous plants out of reach of children
- ❑ Store cleaning and other poisonous products (laundry soaps, fertilizers, etc) out of sight and out of reach of children
- ❑ Keep medication and edible cannabis products out of reach

Prevent drowning

- ❑ Empty water from kiddie pools and pails after use
- ❑ Keep children away from ponds, pools and streams near your home if you are not within arm's reach
- ❑ Never leave your child alone in the tub

** Remember these tips when you are visiting other people's homes as well





HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

Durham Health Connection Line
905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729

durham.ca/childsafety

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

