

Baby-Proofing Basics

Water Safety and Home Drowning Prevention

How safe is too safe?

Infant CPR



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Stop, Look, and Listen

Internet Safety Practices

It is important to talk to your children about internet safety, as well as using strategies to protect your children from internet dangers such as accessing inappropriate information and images, online bullying, or talking to strangers. Parents should talk about the importance of practicing online safety. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends implementing a few simple guidelines to help keep children safe:

- Keep the computer in a centralized location
- Install web-filtering programs to block unwanted content
- Specify what sites are okay for your children to visit
- Talk to children about how to react to online harassment
- Limit the amount of time your child spends online

www.ncs.org

Baby-Proofing Basics

Baby-proofing isn't just for new parents. In fact, injuries and accidents are one of the top reasons for ER visits in children under 3, and account for one-third of unintentional injuries in kids under 14 years old. While supervision is helpful, the best way to prevent accidents in the home is to take a few simple safety precautions.

- Keep choking hazards, toxic, hot, and sharp items out of reach or locked in a cabinet.
- Use safety gates near stairs and other areas of the home that are not child proofed or are off limits.
- Never leave young children in the bath unsupervised.
- Install smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms.
- Install knob covers on doors that lead to non-child proofed areas.
- Keep toys out of cribs.
- Use safety latches and locks on kitchen and bathroom cabinets and drawers.
- Use outlet covers and outlet plates.
- Tie up cords on window blinds to ensure they are out of your child's reach, and avoid putting cribs right next to windows.
- Keep windows on second story homes locked.
- Keep cords from hot items such as irons and curling irons out of reach of children while cooling.
- Secure TVs and heavy entertainment equipment to the wall or resting on sturdy tables and shelves.

For more home safety tips, visit www.kidshealth.org

Water Safety and Home Drowning Prevention

As parents, we watch over our children as they grow and try to balance keeping them safe with allowing them some independence. There are many ways we can take a step back and allow them an opportunity to grow, but time spent around water is not one of them. In the pool, at the beach or even in your bathroom, water can be dangerous if you don't take the right precautions. Drowning is the third leading cause of unintentional injury-related death among children under 14. Swimming pools are the most common site for a drowning among children ages 1 to 4, while the majority of infant drowning deaths happen in bathtubs or large buckets. Any amount of unattended, standing water is a risk.

According to a national study of drowning-related incidents involving children, a parent or caregiver claimed to be supervising the child in nearly 9 out of 10 drowning-related deaths. Constant (meaning uninterrupted, eyes-on) supervision is needed to prevent drowning. If you need to leave the area of the pool or other water, ensure your spouse or another adult has taken over constant supervision of your little one.

Here are a few tips to help keep your children safe:

- Always stay within an arm's reach of your child when he or she is in or near the bathtub, pools, spas or buckets. Never leave your child alone, or in the care of older children.
- Once bath time is over, immediately drain the tub.
- Empty all buckets, containers and wading pools immediately after use. Store them upside-down and out of children's reach.
- Keep toilet lids closed and use toilet seat locks. Keep doors to bathrooms and laundry rooms closed.
- Make sure your pool has four-sided fencing and a self-closing, self-latching gate to prevent a child from wandering into the pool area unsupervised.
- Hot tubs should be covered and locked when not in use.
- When used properly (i.e. turned on) door alarms, pool alarms and automatic pool covers add an extra layer of protection.
- Teach children to never go near or in water without an adult present.
- Enroll your child in survival training and swimming lessons. Programs like Infant Swimming Resource (ISR) and Safe Start will begin teaching infants life-saving skills as young as 6 months of age. Later programs focus on swimming skills for children 4 years and older.
- Learn CPR and know how to respond in water emergencies. Keep a phone nearby to call for help in an emergency.

For more information, visit <http://www.safekids.org/>

How Safe is too Safe?

It is probably not much of a surprise to read a pediatric newsletter centered around the theme of safety. Reducing childhood injuries has long been a major point of emphasis for pediatricians, and much improvement has been made. In fact, children today are statistically far safer than ever before, and this improvement is undoubtedly somewhat due to successful safety campaigns that raise awareness about these potential dangers. But is it possible that our children could potentially be too safe?

Such a question seems ridiculous. After all, as parents, most of us have heard the messages about bicycle helmets, wearing protective goggles while doing yard work, not swimming when there are riptides, stories of poisoned Halloween candy, protecting our eyes from the harmful effects of the sun, children not riding in the front seat of a car, being more careful with fireworks, no guns in the home, no trampolines, not to mention protection from TV/internet/etc. We have tried to teach our children safety slogans such as...

Stop look and listen before crossing the street.

Stop, drop and roll. (fire safety)

When thunder roars, go indoors!

Leaves of three, let it be. (poison ivy)

Be still like a tree. Be still like a log. (safety around dogs)

Slip, slop, slap and wrap. (sun protection)

When in doubt, throw it out. (food safety)

If you like it then you should have put a ring on it. (just seeing if you are still with me)

And even when we as parents are honest about our failures to comply with some of these recommendations, we will admit that all of these recommendations are good things. After all, there couldn't be anything wrong with protecting your child, right? Actually there probably are a few reasons to be concerned about our level of concern.

"We may not be able to prepare the future for our children, but we can at least prepare our children for the future."

~Franklin D. Roosevelt

Why too much emphasis may not be "safe"

Too much concern about our children's safety has been popularly described using the word "over-protective". Obviously, no parent really sets out to be "over-protective"; we simply want to be right-protective and not under-protective. However, in today's society, fear-based parenting is extremely common, and stories that prey on our deepest emotions (i.e. protecting our children) can lead us to seek to avoid all potential dangers. We find ourselves thinking, "What if this happened to my child?" Those in the media business know that these fears are powerful and can be fueled by more and more stories of potential dangers. Each of these stories produce a new "What if ...", and we are given a new threat to avoid. Great for their ratings, yet possibly not great for our approach to parenting.

When parents are over-protective, children tend to grow up anxious. We are repeatedly giving our kids the message that the world is a dangerous place, and the only safe path is the one that avoids all dangers. Around each corner looms a potential bad result. The result is children who are risk-averse, paralyzed by the potential of bad things happening. In his excellent book *Under Pressure*, Carl Honoré writes, "The truth is that there are risks in the world and that children benefit from being exposed to them within reason." Childhood anxiety is at an all-time high and only seems to be increasing. Though there are probably many possible factors contributing to this, it is interesting to note that this rise in anxiety is occurring at a time when kids are statistically safer than ever. It is probably worth mentioning that over-protection also brings a potential for the other extreme - children who respond to over-protection with rebellious thrill-seeking.

We all desire for our children to live full lives, and our love for them leads us to want to protect them. And undoubtedly there are potential injuries that we must fear and address. Drowning is a great example of a childhood injury that our society must be more conscious of and continue to address aggressively. Many other similar threats exist. Yet we must also acknowledge that we too often live in a culture of fear when it comes to parenting, and this is not always good for us or our children. One great way to avoid being over-protective is to simply allow our children adequate time for playing outdoors - as unstructured as possible and, when appropriate based on the child's age, unsupervised.

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Infant CPR Coming Soon at Middleton Pediatrics!

Middleton Pediatrics will be offering an Infant CPR class August 2012. Keep an eye out for dates and times by visiting our website at www.middletonpediatrics.com, or contact our office for more information.