



Keeping Children Safe Around the Home



Preventable injuries kill more Canadian children than any single disease. According to the Canadian Pediatric Society most injuries sustained by children and youth are both predictable and preventable.

The following information provides tips on preventing injury from the most common causes of childhood injury.

Preventing Falls from Windows

- Window screens do not prevent children from falling out. Install window guards and stops on windows higher than ground level to prevent them from opening. Ensure there is a safe-release option in case of a house fire. Move household furniture away from windows to discourage children from climbing to peer out.
- A child's mobility should not be underestimated; children begin climbing before they can walk. Children should not be left unattended on balconies or decks. Move furniture or planters away from the edges as children can climb up and over them.
- Talk to your children, in an age appropriate manner about the dangers of opening and playing near windows.

Medication Safety

- Store medication out of reach of children. Be alert to visitors' medication - guests in your home may not think about safe storage of medicine.
- Children should be taught that medicine should always be given by an adult. Do not refer to medicine as candy, it may encourage them to try it on their own.
- Reduce the risk of children getting into medicine by disposing of unused or expired medicine – many pharmacies have a medicine take-back program.
- Place the phone number for Poison Information on or near your phone in case of emergency. In British Columbia the toll-free 24-hour Poison Information line is 1-800-567-8911.

Poison Prevention

- Teach children what the hazard symbols on the containers mean DANGER DO NOT TOUCH!
- Store all household products and cleaning solutions locked out of sight and reach of children. Keep cleaning products in their original containers. Do not put a potentially poisonous product in something other than its original container (such as a plastic soda bottle) It could be mistaken for something else. Laundry and dish detergent pod packets are attractive to children and can be dangerous if ingested.
- Keep other harmful products, including cosmetics, drugs, vitamins and first-aid treatment products, out of the sight and reach of children.
- Place the phone number for Poison Information in or near your phone in case of emergency.

Choking and Strangulation Prevention

- See the world from a child's perspective. Get on the floor on your hands and knees so that you are at the child's eye level. Keep small objects such as buttons, beads, jewelry, pins, nails, marbles, coins, stones and tacks out of reach and sight.
- Inspect games or toys that include magnets. Seek medical attention immediately if you suspect parts have been swallowed - look for abdominal symptoms, such as pain, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.
- Be aware of button batteries – If button batteries are swallowed, saliva triggers an electrical current causing a chemical reaction that can severely burn the esophagus in as little as two hours - it may not be obvious at first that there is something wrong, as the child can still breathe and act normally after ingesting a battery, though it may seem like your child has a cold or flu. If you suspect your child has ingested a battery, go to the hospital immediately – do not induce vomiting or have your child eat or drink anything until assessed by a medical professional.
- Keep cords and strings attached to window blinds or curtains out of children's reach. Remove cords and drawstrings from children's hoods, hats, and jackets. Do not tie strings or ribbons to pacifiers or toys, remove bibs before bedtime or nap time.

General Safety Tips

- Make sure furniture, such as a wall units, bookcases, or cabinets, are securely fastened to the wall using angle braces or anchors to prevent tipping. Televisions and heavy items should be placed on lower furniture as far back as possible. Install stops on dresser drawers to prevent them from being pulled all the way out.
- Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors on every level of a home. Place near sleeping areas - test the batteries every six months. Create and practice a home fire escape plan with exit routes out of every room.
- Prevent falls, cuts, and other injuries by being attentive to a child placed in a grocery shopping cart, children should stay seated and belted at all times.
- Put up a barrier around fireplaces or wood burning stoves to prevent burns from touching hot surfaces.
- Keep cords for electrical appliances out of the reach of children to prevent children from being hurt or burned if they pull an appliance off a counter.

Nothing is better than ongoing supervision. Do not leave a young child unattended or rely on a safety item to keep them safe. Additional safety tips can be found at www.parachutecanada.org, a national charitable organization dedicated to preventing injuries and saving lives.