



Child Care Safety Guide

Childproofing & Childproofing Devices

Each year, children are injured by hazards in and around the home. The good news is that the risk of injury can be reduced or prevented by using child-safety devices and reminding older children in the house to secure safety devices after disabling them. Most of these safety devices are easy to find and are relatively inexpensive.

Safety devices should be sturdy enough to hinder access and yet easy for you to use. To be effective, they must be properly installed. Follow installation instructions carefully. Remember, no device is completely childproof; determined youngsters have been known to overcome or disable them.

- Do not leave baby alone in a high chair and always use all safety straps. This will prevent injuries and deaths from the baby climbing out or from falling through leg openings.
- Use anti-scald devices for faucets and shower heads and set your water heater temperature to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to help prevent burns from hot water.
- Use doorknob covers and door locks to help prevent children from entering rooms and other areas with possible dangers.
 - Doorknob covers and door locks can help keep children away from places with hazards.
 - Be sure the doorknob cover is sturdy and allows a door to be opened quickly by an adult in case of emergency.
- Use safety latches and locks for cabinets and drawers in kitchens, bathrooms, and other areas to help prevent poisonings and other injuries. Look for safety latches and locks that adults can easily install and use, but are sturdy enough to withstand pulls and tugs from children.
- These can help prevent children from gaining access to medicines, household cleaners, matches, or cigarette lighters, as well as knives and other sharp objects.
- Products with child-resistant packaging should be locked away and kept out of reach. This packaging is not childproof.
- Use safety gates to help prevent falls down stairs and to keep children from entering rooms and other areas with possible dangers.
 - Look for safety gates that children cannot dislodge easily, but that adults can open and close without difficulty.
 - For the top of stairs, only use gates that screw to the wall. Use safety gates that meet current safety standards.
 - Replace older safety gates that have “V” shapes that are large enough to entrap a child’s head and neck.
- Use smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside each bedroom, and outside sleeping areas to alert you to fires. Smoke alarms are essential safety devices for protection against fire deaths



and injuries. Check smoke alarms once a month to make sure they're working. Change batteries at least once a year or consider using 10-year batteries for alarms.

- Use a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm to help prevent CO poisoning. All consumers should install CO alarms near sleeping areas in their homes. Change batteries at least once a year.
- Use outlet covers and outlet plates to help prevent electrocution.
 - Outlet covers and outlet plates can help protect children from electrical shock and possible electrocution.
 - Be sure outlet protectors cannot be easily removed by children and are large enough so that children cannot choke on them.
 - If you are replacing receptacles, use a tamper-resistant type.
- Use corner and edge bumpers to help prevent injuries from falls against sharp edges of furniture and fireplaces. Be sure to look for bumpers that stay securely on furniture or hearth edges.
- Use window guards and safety netting to help prevent falls from windows, balconies, decks, and landings.
 - Check these safety devices frequently to make sure they are secure and properly installed and maintained.
 - Limit window openings to four inches or less, including the space between the window guard bars.
 - If you have window guards, be sure at least one window in each room can be easily used for escape in a fire.
 - Window screens are not effective for preventing children from falling out of windows.
- Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recommends using cordless window coverings in homes with young children, in order to help prevent strangulation. Children can wrap window covering cords around their necks or can pull cords

that are not clearly visible but are accessible and become entangled in the loops.

- If you have window blinds from 2000 or earlier and you cannot afford new, cordless window coverings, call the Window Covering Safety Council at (800) 506-4636 or visit WindowCoverings.org for a free repair kit.
 - Window blinds that have an inner cord (for raising the slats of the blinds) can be pulled by a child and form a potentially deadly loop.
 - Consumers should immediately repair these types of blinds.
 - Consumers should know that WCSC's retrofit kits do not address the dangling pull cord hazard associated with many common window blinds.
- Use anchors to avoid furniture and appliance tip-overs. Furniture, TVs and ranges can tip over and crush young children.
 - Deaths and injuries occur when children climb onto, fall against or pull themselves up on television stands, shelves, bookcases, dressers, desks, chests and ranges.
 - For added security, anchor these products to the floor or attach them to a wall.
 - Free standing ranges and stoves should be installed with anti-tip brackets.
 - Use layers of protection with pools and spas.
 - A barrier completely surrounding the pool or spa including a 4-foot tall fence with self-closing, self-latching gates is essential.
 - If the house serves as a side of the barrier, doors heading to the pool should have an alarm or the pool should have a power safety cover.
 - Pool alarms can serve as an additional layer of protection.
 - Sliding glass doors, with locks that must be re-secured after each use, are not an effective barrier to pools.

Cribs and Infant Sleeping Position

For infants under 12 months of age, the following tips reduce the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome), help prevent suffocation and injury.

- Place baby on his/her back in a crib. Always put your baby to sleep on his or her back because tummy sleeping increases the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and suffocation.
- Ensure cribs are assembled correctly and the crib has no damage. Cribs assembled incorrectly or that have missing, broken or loose hardware can trap children or cause suffocation.
 - Corner posts should not be over 1/16th inch high and no cutouts in the headboard or footboard so baby's clothes or head cannot get caught.
 - Crib slats should be no wider than a can of soda (2 3/8th inches) so the baby's body cannot fit through the slats. Slats should not be broken or damaged. Infants can become strangled when their head and neck become entrapped in gaps.
 - Mesh cribs should use mesh less than ¼ inch in size, with no tears, holes or loose threads. The mesh should secure to the floor plate and top rail. The top rail should be covered and the cover should have no holes or tears.
- Use firm, tight-fitting mattress so a baby cannot get trapped between the mattress and the crib. Never allow a gap larger than two fingers between the mattress and sides of the crib to prevent the child being trapped.
- Do not put pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, pillow-like bumper pads or pillow-like stuffed toys in the crib. Consider using a sleeper instead of a blanket. Use a fitted bottom sheet specifically made only for crib use.

Helmets

- Wearing a helmet during recreational activities can reduce the risk of a severe head injury or can even save your life.
- Helmets should not be worn while climbing trees or playing on playgrounds to reduce the threat of strangulation.
- A helmet protects your head by absorbing the impact energy instead of your head. During a fall or collision, high impact energies to the head can produce skull fractures and severe brain injuries. Helmets are designed to absorb this energy.
- Helmets are not proven to prevent concussions.
 - Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion so that after a fall or collision, you can recognize the symptoms, get proper treatment, and prevent additional injury.
 - See <https://www.cdc.gov/headsup> for more information.
- There are different helmets for different activities.
 - Each type of helmet is made to protect your head from the kind of impacts that typically are associated with a particular activity or sport.
 - Be sure to wear a helmet that is appropriate for the particular activity you're involved in.
 - Helmets designed for other activities may not protect your head as effectively.
 - There are only a few that can be worn for more than one activity. For example, you can wear a CPSC-compliant bicycle helmet while bicycling, recreational in-line skating or roller skating, or riding a kick scooter.
 - There are safety standards for most types of helmets.
 - Bicycle and motorcycle helmets must comply with mandatory federal safety standards.
 - Helmets for many other recreational activities are subject to voluntary safety standards.
- Helmets that meet a particular standard will contain a special label or marking that indicates compliance with that standard (usually found on the liner inside of the helmet, on the exterior surface, or attached to the chin strap).

- Don't rely solely on the helmet's name or appearance, or claims made on the packaging, to determine whether the helmet meets the appropriate requirements for your activity.
- Don't choose style over safety. When choosing a helmet, avoid helmets that contain nonessential elements that protrude from the helmet (e.g., horns, Mohawks)—these may look interesting, but they may prevent the helmet's smooth surface from sliding after a fall, which could lead to injury.
- Don't add anything to the helmet, such as stickers, coverings, or other attachments that aren't provided with the helmet, as such items can negatively affect the helmet's performance.
- Wearing the activity appropriate helmet that fit, and wearing it correctly are essential for the helmet to provide protection.
 - Many have chin straps and they are essential for the helmet to function properly.
 - A helmet should be both comfortable and snug.
 - Be sure that the helmet is worn so that it is level on your head—not tilted back on the top of your head or pulled too low over your forehead. Once on your head, the helmet should not move in any direction, back-to-front or side-to-side.
 - For helmets with a chin strap, be sure the chin strap is securely fastened so that the helmet doesn't move or fall off during a fall or collision.
- If you buy a helmet for a child, bring the child with you so that the helmet can be tested for a good fit. Carefully examine the helmet and the accompanying instructions and safety literature.
- Helmets are designed to withstand one impact (a single-impact helmet) or more than one impact (a multiple-impact helmet).
 - Single-impact helmets, like bicycle helmets, are designed to protect against the impact from just a single fall, such as a bicyclist's fall onto the pavement. The foam material in the helmet will crush to absorb the impact energy during a fall or collision. The materials will not protect you again from an additional impact. Even if there are no visible signs of damage to the helmet, you must replace it after such an event.
 - Multiple-impact helmets are designed to protect against multiple impacts. Two examples are football and ice hockey helmets. These helmets are designed to withstand multiple impacts of the type associated with the respective activities. However, you may still have to replace the helmet after one severe impact if the helmet has visible signs of damage, such as a cracked shell or permanent dent in the shell or liner. Consult the manufacturer's instructions or certification stickers on the helmet for guidance on when the helmet should be replaced.

Home Playground Safety

- Install and maintain a shock-absorbing surface around the play equipment.
 - Use at least 9 inches of wood chips, mulch, or shredded rubber for play equipment up to 7 feet high.
 - If sand or pea gravel is used, install at least a 9-inch layer for play equipment up to 5 feet high.
 - Or, use surfacing mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials.
 - Install protective surfacing at least 6 feet in all directions from play equipment.
 - For swings, be sure surfacing extends, in back and front, twice the height of the suspending bar.
- Never attach ropes, jump ropes, clotheslines, or pet leashes to play equipment as they are strangulation hazards.

- Check for hardware, like open "S" hooks or protruding bolt ends, which can be hazardous.
- Check for spaces that could trap children, such as openings in guardrails or between ladder rungs; these spaces should measure less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches.
- Make sure platforms and ramps have guardrails to prevent falls.
- Check for sharp points or edges in equipment. Remove tripping hazards, like exposed concrete footings, tree stumps, and rocks.
- Regularly check play equipment and surfacing to make sure both are in good condition.
- Carefully supervise children on play equipment to make sure they are safe.

Toy Safety

- Choose a toy that is appropriate for the age and skill level of the child. Toys recommended for older children may be hazardous in the hands of a younger child. Teach older children to help keep these toys from younger children.
- Look for other safety labels including: "Flame retardant/Flame resistant" on fabric products and "Washable/hygienic materials" on stuffed toys and dolls.
- Inspect toys for sharp edges, points, rust, weak parts, or splinters. Repair or remove any damaged or dangerous toys.
- Toys should be put away to avoid trips and falls. Toy storage should be inspected and ventilated.
- If toys are stored outdoors, inspect regularly for rust and weak parts.
- Toys with cords, long strings, ribbons, loops or wires can be dangerous for infants. Never hang items with these on a crib or bed.
- Infant toys, such as rattles, squeeze toys, and teethingers, should be large enough so that they cannot enter and become lodged in an infant's throat.
- Balloons, when uninflated or broken, can choke or suffocate if young children try to swallow them. More children have suffocated on uninflated balloons and pieces of broken balloons than on any other type of toy.
- Remove crib gyms when the child is able to pull up on hand and knees to avoid strangulation.
- New toys intended for children under eight years of age should be free of sharp glass and metal edges. A CPSC regulation prohibits sharp points in new toys and other articles intended for use by children under eight years of age.
- The law bans small parts in toys intended for children under three. This includes removable small eyes and noses on stuffed toys and dolls, and small, removable squeakers on squeeze toys.
- Toy caps and some noise-making guns and other toys can produce sounds at noise levels that can damage hearing. Do not fire closer than one foot to the ear. Do not use indoors.
- Projectiles, guided missiles and similar flying toys, can be turned into weapons and can injure eyes in particular.
 - Children should never be permitted to play with hobby or sporting equipment that has sharp points.
 - Arrows or darts used by children should have soft cork tips, rubber suction cups or other protective tips intended to prevent injury.
 - Check to be sure the tips are secure.
 - Avoid those dart guns or other toys which might be capable of firing articles not intended for use in the toy, such as pencils or nails.
- Electric toys must meet mandatory requirements for maximum surface temperatures, electrical construction and prominent warning labels.
 - Electric toys with heating elements are recommended only for children over eight years old.
 - Children should be taught to use electric toys properly, cautiously and under adult supervision.

Product Registration

A product registration card is a postage paid card that requests consumer contact information. These cards and an online option are required to be included in infant & toddler durable products made after June 2010. This includes products like cribs, strollers and high chairs. Registering your product makes sure manufacturers have your contact information in case of a recall or other safety issue; it can't be used for marketing. Only information necessary to identify the product and get the information to you correctly is requested. Filling out these cards online or sending in the cards is important.

- Registering your child's product will allow manufacturers to contact you directly if the product has been recalled. Filling out these cards could save a life or prevent an injury.
- Registration allows the consumer to be contacted directly, so the consumer does not have to rely on catching the news to learn of a recall, or worse yet, never learning of the recall, which can have life altering consequences.

For more information or to file a complaint, visit our website or contact:

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,
Trade and Consumer Protection
Bureau of Consumer Protection
2811 Agriculture Drive, PO Box 8911
Madison, WI 53718-8911

Email: DATCPHotline@wi.gov

Website: datcp.wi.gov

Phone: (800) 422-7128 TTY: (608) 224-5058