

Safety Begins at Home

Unintentional injuries, not illness, are the #1 health risk to Canadian children. Thankfully, 90% of injuries are preventable and predictable. Most injuries to infants and young children happen in the home. Here are some practical steps you can take to keep your baby safe.

Falls

- Keep one hand on your baby during diaper changes. Keep diapers and clothing within easy reach of the changing area.
- Make sure the sides of the crib or playpen are up securely.
- Do not use baby walkers with wheels. Falls involving baby walkers can cause serious head injuries.
- Always use the safety strap in the high chair to keep your child from falling out.
- Install safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs. Do not use pressure gates at the top of stairs. This type of gate could fall over if a child leans on it.
- Keep your baby's crib and other furniture away from windows and balcony rails.
- Put window guards on all windows on the second floor or above. Window screens will not stop your child from falling.

Burns and scalds

- Always stay with your baby when he or she is in the bath.
- Always test the temperature of the bath water with your hand before you put the baby in the bath. It should feel warm, not hot.
- Lower the temperature of the hot water in your home to 49°C (120°F) by lowering the temperature setting on your hot water tank.
- Do not hold your baby while you are eating or drinking anything hot.
- Keep cords from electrical appliances where your child cannot reach them. Do not let them hang over the edge of the counter or table.
- Keep pots and pans on the rear burners with pot handles turned inward.

Choking and suffocation

- Keep small objects such as coins or buttons out of your baby's reach.
- Avoid ties or ribbons on baby clothes or toys.
- Tie blind and curtain cords up where baby cannot reach them, or cut them off.

Additional safety steps

- Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, and test them every month. Make sure you have a working fire extinguisher.
- Make sure your baby's equipment meets Canadian Safety Standards Act. This includes cribs, strollers, car seats, toys, and high chairs. Check labels for safety information. Make sure second hand products meet safety standards too. You can contact Health Canada Consumer Product Safety Regional office. See phone numbers and web sites on page 29.
- Keep medicines, cleaning products, vitamins, and other poisons locked up and out of reach.
- Use outlet covers and plug covers to protect your baby from electrical shock.
- Make sure bookcases, lamps, televisions, and other heavy furniture are fastened to the wall so that your baby cannot pull them over.

This list is intended as a reference tool only. Installing safety products and removing potential hazards can help reduce unintentional injuries. These measures are not substitutes for adult supervision. Supervision is the most important thing you can do to protect your child.

Be ready for an emergency

- Keep emergency numbers and your complete address near your telephone.