

A Checklist for Parents and Caregivers

Many homes have hazards that increase a child's risk of being injured. Although there is no absolute way to prevent injuries, taking certain steps and precautions can decrease the risk.

Falls and Falling Objects

- Make sure window guards are installed on all windows above the first floor that are not emergency exits. Do not rely on insect screens to keep children from falling out of windows.
- Keep furniture away from windows to avoid children from climbing out.
- Use safety gates to block access to stairs or other dangerous places.
- Securely anchor television sets to a wall or a large, balanced stand.

Poison

- Lock up potential poisons out of children's reach, including cleaning supplies, medicines, and vitamins.
- Use safety latches for drawers and cabinets.
- Follow directions when giving medicine to children.
- Keep products (for example, medicine and cleaning products) in original, labeled containers. Never put them in food or drink containers.
- Avoid using aerosol spray products.
- Post the phone number for Poison Control near the phone (1-800-222-1222).

Choking and Suffocation

- Keep your home free of little things a child can choke on. Buttons, coins, jewelry, and small toys cannot be left lying around.
- Don't give a child under age four any foods that can block the windpipe and cause choking such as nuts, hard candies, popcorn, pretzels, or raw carrots. Cut hot dogs into small bites.
- Never let children run, play sports, or ride in the car with gum, candy, or lollipops in their mouths.
- Encourage children to sit when eating and to chew thoroughly.
- Learn how to provide early treatment for children who are choking; know the Heimlich maneuver to help a choking child. (Resource: American Red Cross at <http://www.nyredcross.org/takeaclass.php>)
- Always follow manufacturers' age recommendations when buying toys. Some toys have small parts that can cause choking, so heed all warnings on a toy's packaging.
- Never place an infant face down on soft bedding.
- Infants and children should sleep alone in a crib, bassinette, or bed.

Fire, Burns, or Electrical Shock

- Install smoke detector in the home, particularly outside of each bedroom. Test smoke detectors once a month and change batteries every spring and fall when you change your clocks.
- Plan several ways to escape from each room if a fire starts, and practice a fire escape plan with your family.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors in every sleeping area and test them monthly.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children. Teach children, fire is not a toy.
- Use back burners on stoves, and turn pot handles inward. Keep children away from the stove or microwave when cooking.
- Do not use a stove, oven or burners to heat the home.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in the home.
- Cover electrical outlets with safety plugs.

Drowning

- If you have a pool in your backyard, install fencing on all sides of the pool. Install a self-closing gate with a lock that is out of a child's reach.
- Learn how to swim and provide your child with swimming lessons.
- Never leave a child unattended while bathing.
- Never leave a small child unattended near a bucket filled with any amount of water or other liquid.
- Never use air-filled swimming aids (such as water wings) in place of personal floatation devices (life preservers) or as a substitute for constant adult supervision.
- Dump out all water from a wading pool when you are finished using it.
- Learn CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). In the time it might take for paramedics to arrive, your CPR skills could make a difference in someone's life. (Resource: American Red Cross at <http://www.nyredcross.org/takeaclass.php>)

Firearms

- Keep guns and other firearms out of the house.
- If guns are in the house, unload them, put them in a locked place, and keep the keys out of your child's reach. Store the gun in a separate place from the bullets.
- Make sure guns are equipped with a safety lock.

NYC's Child Fatality Reports and Other Information on Injuries in New York City are posted online at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/ip/ip-index.shtml>