



# How to reduce unintentional injuries in children under 5 years (accident prevention)

**It's a good idea to take the time to 'crawl' around your home and get an idea of where the dangers to your child might lie.**

Seeing things at your child's eye level will give you a clear appreciation of safety issues you may not have considered, allowing you to make your home safer from top to bottom. The basics:

- Most fires in the home can be prevented, by taking some basic and common sense precautions. Make sure your home is fitted with at least one smoke alarm and ensure that you test them at least once a month. Keep matches and lighters out of reach.
- Most fire and rescue services offer what is commonly known as a "Safe and Well" visit, which may also be known as a "Home Fire Risk Assessment" or "Home Fire Safety Check". This will help you identify fire risks and know how you can reduce and prevent them. You will also be advised on how to put together an escape plan in case a fire breaks out in your home. Some fire services fit free smoke alarms and in all cases will advise where to fit them (<https://www.fireservice.co.uk/safety/>).
- Ensure electrical safety by ensuring your supply is fitted with a residual current device (RCD) which will switch off electricity automatically if there is a fault to prevent a fatal shock if you or your child touches something live. Keep all electrical appliances, particularly mobile phone chargers, hair straighteners and hair dryers, out of reach and disconnected (<https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guides-and-advice/around-the-home/visual-checks/>)

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**For additional Parent Tips see [www.ihv.org.uk](http://www.ihv.org.uk)**

The information in this resource was updated on 30/05/2019 and will be reviewed again in 05/2021 and when new evidence becomes available.

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- Store all medicines out of your child's reach. Painkillers are one of the most common causes of children being admitted to hospital for poisoning. Cosmetics, perfumes and essential oils should also be stored away from your children. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/keeping-children-safe-poisonous-substances>
- Store chemical and cleaning products (including common items such as detergent liquid tabs) where children cannot see or reach them. General household cleaning products should be stored in a cupboard with a child safety lock.
- Ensure all family members, such as grandparents, are aware of safety advice. Medicines, tablets and hearing aid batteries carried in handbags, or left around, are a risk to children.
- It is important to bear in mind that child-resistant tops on medicines and cleaning products are not fully childproof and even children as young as 3 may be able to open them.
- Harmful garden products such as weed killer should also be stored well out of view and reach of children. The same applies to general household and garden DIY tools and appliances. Keep garden sheds and garages - where these sorts of items are often stored - locked at all times. Keep all chemicals and household cleaning products in their original labelled containers. Don't transfer them to any other containers which may not be safe for corrosive substances and are unmarked.
- Be aware of the risks and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. Ensure all gas appliances are serviced regularly by a registered engineer. Wood or coal burning stoves should have their chimneys swept twice a year. Avoid using paraffin or cabinet heaters. Never use BBQs indoors or take them inside when they are cooling down when their carbon monoxide emissions are at their highest. Purchase a CO alarm and monitor which complies with a British Standard EN 50291 identified with a British or European approval mark such as a Kitemark. <https://www.fireservice.co.uk/safety/carbon-monoxide/>
- It's a good idea to have a first aid kit in your home. Guidance about what to include can be found here <https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/accidents-first-aid-and-treatments/what-should-i-keep-in-my-first-aid-kit/>
- You may also want to learn more about first aid or attend a first aid course if you haven't already done so. <http://www.sja.org.uk/sja/first-aid-advice>
- New risks around the home are carefully monitored by organisations such as the Child Accident Prevention Trust and it's a good idea to keep up-to-date with the latest guidance on safety in the home. Recently, concerns have been raised about the harm caused by swallowing powerful button batteries, e-cigarettes and their refills (which should be kept well out of reach), and the dangers of suffocation and overheating with cot bumpers and sleeping pods.
- You can get up-to-date information about child safety on the Child Accident Prevention Trust website: [www.capt.org.uk](http://www.capt.org.uk)
- If you have any worries or questions about safety around the home or when on holiday, your health visitor can offer advice which follows current safety guidelines.

## More information:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/475173/Fire-Safety-for-Parents-and-Child-Carers.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/475173/Fire-Safety-for-Parents-and-Child-Carers.pdf)

<https://www.rospa.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/home-safety/home-garden-safety-checklist.pdf>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/baby-safety-tips>

<https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guides-and-advice/around-the-home/visual-checks/>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/keeping-children-safe-poisonous-substances>

<https://www.fireservice.co.uk/safety/carbon-monoxide/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/accidents-first-aid-and-treatments/what-should-i-keep-in-my-first-aid-kit/>

[http://www.sja.org.uk/sja/first-aid-advice.aspx?gclid=EAlal-QobCh-MI2pKXheOj3QIVTbftCh1s2gvzEAAAYAAEgKDwvD\\_BwE](http://www.sja.org.uk/sja/first-aid-advice.aspx?gclid=EAlal-QobCh-MI2pKXheOj3QIVTbftCh1s2gvzEAAAYAAEgKDwvD_BwE)

<https://www.capt.org.uk/>

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/child/childsafety/water.html>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/baby-safety-tips/#close>

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