

Safety

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Make Your Home Safe for Your Child

Most injuries to young children happen at home. Check your home often. Look at your home from your child's point of view to see what might be dangerous.

Around 6 months of age, your baby starts to move around a lot more. Look for possible dangers in your house and remove them. As your child grows and can do more things, the dangers will change.

Make your home a safe place to explore

- Block the stairs with gates at the top and bottom.
- Cut cords for blinds and curtains short. Remove all drawstrings from clothing. Children can be strangled on these cords.

- Lock all medicines, vitamins, household cleaners, and other dangerous chemicals in a high cabinet. Keep lighters, matches, sharp objects and electrical appliances out of your child's reach.
- Attach all bookcases, heavy appliances, and other heavy furniture to the wall.
- Keep electrical outlets covered and tie up electrical cords.



Keep your child safe at meal time.

- Cook on the back burners of your stove. Turn pot handles away from your child.
- Keep hot liquids and hot foods away from the edge of the table or countertop.
- Choose a high chair with a safety belt. Use the belt every time your child sits in the chair.

i Prevention is the most important part of child safety.

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Keep your child safe at play.

- Keep small toys and other small objects away from your baby. He could choke on them.
- Check the size of your baby's toys. If a toy, or any part of a toy, can fit inside a toilet paper tube, it is too small for your baby to play with before age 3 years. Choose toys that are meant for your child's age.



Keep your child clean and safe.

- When your child is in or near water, always make sure you are able to touch him by reaching out your hand. If you have to leave the room for any reason, take your baby with you.
- It is never safe to leave a baby alone in the bath, not even for a few seconds.
- Keep one hand on your baby at all times when you change her diaper or clothing on a changing table.

Keep your baby safe while sleeping.

- Always place your baby on his back to sleep, both at night and for naps. Put your baby on his back right from the start.
- Use only a crib that meets current Canadian safety standards. The crib mattress should fit tightly inside the crib. Use only a fitted sheet. Keep toys and loose bedding out of the crib. Anything extra can increase the risk of injury and suffocation.
- Have your baby sleep in a crib in your bedroom for the first 6 months. You can sleep in a separate bed or on a mattress beside the crib. It is unsafe to share the same sleep surface as your baby, like a bed, couch or futon. Bed sharing is linked to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and suffocation.

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Why Do Children Need Adults To Keep Them Safe?

- **Children want and need to be active.** They need to explore if they are to learn and grow.
- **Children live in a world that is not always safe.** Many common items are not made with the safety of children in mind. They are safe for adults, but they are not safe for children.
- **Children grow and change quickly.** They are learning new and different skills all the time. They need extra protection while they practice new skills.
- **Pay close attention to your child's development.** You may be surprised when she starts to do something new. When you know what she can do and what to expect at each stage, you can help prevent serious injuries.
- **Children do not always know the difference between what is fun and what is dangerous.** Children do not think and act like adults. They do not react to danger the same way that adults do.

i It takes only a second for your child to get hurt. Children need your help to stay safe.



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- **Be prepared.** Think ahead. Look for possible dangers in your home and when you go outside. Remove the dangers if you can.
- **Protect your child.** Remove dangerous things in your home so your child can play safely. Sometimes you cannot remove the danger outside. Help your child stay safe even when there is danger. For example, you cannot stop all the cars on the street. But you can hold your child's hand when you cross the street.
- **Notice the new things your child can do.** Check often to see if your child can now reach something that is dangerous.
- **Stay close to your child.** Many injuries happen when a parent or caregiver is not close by. Stay close to a young child so you can reach her quickly if she is in danger. When your baby is younger than 1 year old, stay very close unless she is in a safe place, like an approved crib or a playpen.
- **Start early to teach your child about being safe.** Talk to your child about what is safe and what is not safe. Teach your child how to look for dangers.
- **Be a good example.** Be safe yourself so your child can learn from you. For example, wear a helmet when you are riding a bike so your toddler will learn to wear one too.
- **Be ready in case your child is injured.** Keep a First Aid kit in your home and in the homes of those who care for your child. Have up-to-date training in First Aid and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). Make a list of emergency telephone numbers and keep the list near the telephone. Include the number for the Poison Control Centre.



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Choosing Safe Children's Products

It is important that all baby furniture and children's products meet Canadian safety standards.

A product is recalled because the company that makes it has found something wrong that could be dangerous. Contact Consumer Product Safety at Health Canada to learn about children's products that have been recalled.

Highchairs

- Choose a high chair with a safety belt. Use the belt every time your child sits in the chair.
- Make sure the food tray is firmly attached to the frame and has no parts that could pinch little fingers.

Cribs

- Do not use any crib made before 1986.
- The crib should be in good condition and not have loose, missing, or broken parts.
- The crib mattress should fit tightly inside the crib. You should have room for only one finger between the mattress and each side of the crib.

Playpens

- Use a playpen with small holes in the mesh.
- The playpen should only be used with the mattress pad provided. Do not add an extra mattress, large toys, or blankets to the playpen. Do not use a playpen as a crib.

Baby gates

- Use screws to fasten a baby gate in place at the top of any staircase. Use a pressure gate at the bottom of stairs and in doorways. Always keep the gates locked.
- Openings in the gate should be too small for your child's head or body to fit through.

i If you have concerns about a product, call the company that made it or check their website.



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Strollers

- Choose a sturdy stroller. Follow the instructions for your child's weight and height.
- Always use a stroller that has a safety belt. Make sure you use the belt each time your child sits in the stroller.
- Make sure the stroller's brakes work properly. Use the brakes each time you put your child into or take him out of the stroller.

Baby slings and soft carriers

- Check the sling or carrier for any rips, torn straps, or broken hardware.
- Check on your baby often while she is in the sling or carrier. Adjust your baby's position so that she is able to breathe freely.

Baby walkers

- Do not use baby walkers. They can cause a baby to fall down the stairs. It is against the law for anyone to sell baby walkers in Canada.

Car Seats

- The right car seat is one that matches your child's height and weight and can be correctly installed in your vehicle. Use it for every ride in a vehicle.
- Be careful when buying a second-hand car seat. Make sure that it has not expired or that the car seat has not been in a crash.

Second-hand products

- You can save money by buying used products, but be careful. Before buying, check carefully to see if the item
 - has been damaged or is cracked
 - is missing parts or has loose parts
 - is missing the instructions
 - has been banned or recalled because it does not meet Canadian safety standards.



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Everyday Safety Outdoors

Playground Safety

- Play structures are designed for different ages. A child under 5 years of age should play on the low structures. Watch out for sharp objects or spaces where your child's head could get stuck.
- Check the surface under swings, slides and climbing structures. It should be a deep and soft surface, not dirt or grass.
- Stay close to your child. This means staying right beside her as she comes down a slide or when she is on a swing.
- Be sure your child is not wearing helmet, scarves or drawstrings when using playground equipment.

Tricycle and Bicycle Safety

- Be sure your child wears an approved bicycle helmet every time he rides a tricycle or bike. Remove his helmet before he moves onto play equipment.
- Be a good example. Wear a helmet when you ride a bike. You are your child's best teacher.



Road Safety

- Make sure your child plays in a park or a fenced yard and not near the street or driveway. Make sure someone is watching him at all times.
- You can start to teach your 3 or 4 year old safety rules for crossing the street but you must always hold her hand when crossing the street.
- Be a good example. Follow safety rules yourself.

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Fun & Easy Activities

Games to Teach Safety Rules

Safety Rule Rhymes

You can make up songs about traffic safety and sing them to a familiar tune. This is an easy and fun way to help your child remember the rules. Here are two examples you can sing to the tune of “Frère Jacques.”

Yellow light means wait.

Yellow light means wait.

Red means stop.

Red means stop.

When the light is green,

Then we can cross,

Holding hands, holding hands.

At the corner.

At the corner.

We look left.

Then we look right.

We look left again,

Then we can cross,

Holding hands, holding hands.

Freeze and Unfreeze

Sometimes it is hard for a child to stop moving when you want him to. Make a game out of stopping and starting when you say the special words. Practise first at home by walking around the room together. When you say “freeze!” you and your child stop and pretend to be frozen statues. When you say “unfreeze” you can both start moving again.

In the game, your child will learn to react quickly. Then you can use the word “freeze” to tell him to stop when you are walking outside. It is easier to obey the rules when your child feels he is playing a game.

