



# APRIL - JUNE 2024 CHILD ACCIDENT PREVENTION NEWSLETTER

## FACTS

- One in five poisoning accidents to under-fives are from household chemicals – things like liquid laundry capsules and cleaning products.
- Child safety caps aren't completely child-proof – some three and four-year-olds can open them in seconds.
- Most home accidents are preventable through increased awareness, improvements in the home environment and greater product safety.
- The most severe injuries are associated with heat related accidents and falls from a height. Older children are more likely to sustain fractures than younger counterparts.<sup>3</sup> Younger children have a higher percentage of burns and scalds as well as poisoning and ingestion
- The largest number of accidents happen in the living/dining room.<sup>3</sup> However, the most serious accidents happen in the kitchen and on the stairs. Every year more than 67,000 children experience an accident in the kitchen - 43,000 of these are aged between 0-4 years; 58,000 children have accidents on the stairs.

### Plants

Teach children never to eat plants or berries they have picked in the garden or out and about in the countryside, without checking with an adult first.

### Gardening equipment

Lock garden tools away in a shed or other secure area, and never leave electrical equipment plugged in when not in use. Keep chemicals such as weed killer and fertiliser out of reach of young children, and always keep them in their original containers – never be tempted to transfer them to food jars or drinks bottles

**Pedestrians – younger children** • Get young children into the habit of holding your hand or use walking reins • Ask questions while you're out to help them understand simple ideas like 'fast' and 'slow' • You can start teaching the Green Cross Code from age five, encouraging children to stop, look, listen and think • But they won't always remember safety rules, especially if they're excited or spot a friend across the road • Children will copy what you do, so try to avoid stepping into the road without checking for traffic first. If you can do the right thing, it will help them get into good habits

## OUTDOOR SAFETY



## CHEMICALS IN AND AROUND THE HOME

At around 6 months babies start to put things in their mouths, which means they are at risk of swallowing something harmful. You can stop them from getting hold of poisonous things. The best place to keep medicines is locked away or up high where your baby can't come across them. Fit safety catches on any low cupboard doors and drawers and make sure bottle tops and lids are on properly. Don't forget the painkillers in your handbag, on the floor or the ones on the bedside table. Toddlers love to explore and will copy what you do. This means they are more at risk from poisoning than any other age group. Here's how to make sure your toddler stays safe from poisoning. When you're visiting friends or relatives, take a few moments to look out for medicines or cleaning products lying around, like in Granny's bedside table, so you're not taken by surprise. Even small amounts of alcohol can be harmful to small children, so clear up any glasses with alcohol dregs left in them.

- Closely supervise children in and around the home
- Keep household chemicals out of sight and reach of children, preferably in a locked cupboard. Remember this also applies to the garage and shed
- Always store household cleaning chemicals in their original containers
- Replace lids and put all products away immediately after use
- Dispose of unwanted household cleaning products safely
- Store household cleaning products in a different place from food and medicine
- Use household cleaning products according to label directions
- Mixing household products can cause dangerous gases to form.

**Carbon Monoxide**  
You can't see, smell or taste it but if but if carbon monoxide creeps out from flame burning appliances it can kill children in seconds. Make sure that you have an audible carbon monoxide alarm fitted in your home - ideally one in every room with a fuel-burning appliance.

## OPEN WINDOWS

- Pre-school children are particularly susceptible to falls from a height:
- They are curious and want to see what's happening outside but have no real understanding of danger.
- They can take parents by surprise by a sudden breakthrough in their development. You think they don't climb but, before you know it, they can clamber up on furniture or haul their toy box across the floor and open a window. And accidents can happen very quickly, when your back is turned or you're distracted for a minute.
- Small children are built differently to adults – their heads are proportionally much bigger than ours, so they have a different centre of gravity. This means that, if they lean out of a window, they may topple out. And when they land, their head takes much of the impact.

If you can, move furniture away from windows to make it harder for small children to climb up. You can also start teaching them where not to climb – though they may forget if there's something interesting outside they really want to see.

## CHOKING

Young children have narrow airways and are still learning to chew, breathe and swallow in the right order (add talking or moving around and it gets really complicated). Knowing some simple steps puts you in the driving seat and lessens the worry.

- STAY – Stay with children when they're eating – it's the biggest thing you can do for them
- STILL – Get children to sit still – it can be a battle but it's much safer

Avoid foods that have an increase in causing choking in young children, such as:  
Mini eggs  
Grapes  
Marshmallows  
Popcorn  
Smarties

## DOGS AND CHILDREN

### Close supervision keeps children safe

Close supervision can feel like a big ask. But [Dogs Trust](#) breaks it down into three key things:

- Stay close – watch, listen and stay close so that you can respond before anything bad happens.
- Step – in – intervene if your dog or your child is behaving unsafely or if either one looks uncomfortable.
- Separate – keep children and dogs separate when you know you're likely to be distracted, like during the morning rush, making the dinner, or answering the front door. You can use a safety gate, put your dog in another room, or take your child or dog with you.

The RSPCA outlines distinct behaviours that dogs show when they are worried and when they are angry or very unhappy. Examples include:

- A worried dog may have their head low and ears back with tail tucked.
- An angry dog may have a tense body, weight forward with their ears and tail up, looking directly at you.

**Remember every dog is an individual and may have different ways of showing that they are uncomfortable, worried or anxious**

