

Keeping toddlers SAFE

Toddlers need to have a safe environment. They are too young to know how to behave safely. Telling them and teaching them about danger does not keep them safe. Keeping your toddler safe is your responsibility.

Keep a first aid kit in the house and car and keep emergency phone numbers in easy reach and where everyone can find them. Doing a first aid course for children is really useful.

Toys and play

Check toys and play equipment regularly for sharp edges, splinters and loose parts and make sure that the surface under climbing frames and swings is soft.

Toys for young children should not have small, loose parts that can be broken off and swallowed.

Baby walkers often cause injuries and should not be used.

Falls

Falls are the major cause of toddler injury.

You can help by padding sharp corners of furniture, using barrier gates or locking doors to stop your child going into dangerous places.

Avoid using bunk beds with toddlers.

Make sure you use straps on the high chair and pram/stroller and don't leave young children alone on change tables, high chairs, or playground equipment.

Teach your toddler how to climb down as well as climb up.



Check on your toddler – don't leave him alone in the car.

Making your home toddler-proof!



- Give your toddler interesting things to play with around the home, e.g. a pile of cushions to climb over, a cardboard box tunnel to crawl through, a cubby house under the table.
- Make sure that there is a safe place and space for your child to explore and run every day.
- Make sure that you lock away any medications or drugs so that your toddler can't get to them.
- Put childproof locks on kitchen cupboards and covers over power points.
- If you have a swimming pool make sure that you have an approved fence around it with a childproof lock.
- Make sure that any garden gates or fences are secure, so your toddler is not able to run out onto the driveway or street.
- If children have to go somewhere in the car or wait in a waiting room, take some toys or books to keep them busy.



Burns and scalds

- Keep hot things well away from the edge of tables.
- Turn saucepan handles away from the edge of the stove. Use a stove guard.
- Use placemats instead of tablecloths.
- Have short or curly electric cords that don't hang over the side of benches.
- Be careful of hot irons and cords dangling when ironing.
- Remember that many toddlers can light matches and lighters, and unscrew the globes on Christmas tree lights.
- To help prevent scalding from hot water, make sure that the hot water for your bath, shower and basin comes out at 50 degrees Centigrade or less. You can attach a safety shut-off device directly to the tap, or your plumber can install a device which automatically mixes cold water with the hot, to limit the temperature. The water heater itself should maintain stored water at 60 degrees Centigrade minimum.
- Run cold water into the bath first.
- If a child has a burn or scald, put the burnt area under running cold water for at least 20 minutes.
- Use fireguards for open fires, pot belly stoves and radiators.
- Keep a fire extinguisher or fire blanket in the kitchen.

Poisoning

Toddlers explore everywhere they can reach and still put things into their mouths. They don't understand poison signs.

- Keep kitchen and laundry detergents out of reach, best in a locked cupboard. Dishwasher powder is particularly dangerous.
- Use a child-proof medicine cupboard for all medicines (including oral contraceptives).
- Check that visitors don't leave bags with tablets in them in your child's reach.
- Lock garden products away.
- Keep poisons in their original, labelled containers.
- Never put poisons into food or drink containers.



- Put locks on shed doors and keep shut.
- Write the Poisons Information number **131126** and the number for an ambulance **000** next to your telephone.

Choking and suffocating

- Check that there are no small objects or coins left lying around.
- Don't give your child hard pieces of food such as raw carrot to chew.
- Toddlers should sit down when eating.
- Stay with your child when he is eating.
- Never give toddlers nuts.
- Don't force your child to eat anything he does not want.
- Tie empty plastic bags with a knot in the middle so that they cannot be put over your child's head.
- Cords or ribbons on toys, dummies and clothing should be short and out of reach so they can't choke your child.



Drowning

Most children who drown are under four years old. Drowning happens very quickly and quietly. Young children can drown in only a few centimetres of water. Teaching your toddler to swim will not prevent drowning.

- Stay with your child whenever he is near or in water, such as the bath, paddle pools, buckets or at the beach, creeks, rivers, swimming pools and dams.
- Keep a lid on nappy buckets and keep them out of reach.
- Water can collect in all sorts of things after rain. Empty them!

- Make sure that the paddle pool is emptied after every use.
- All other pools should be fenced, with a self-locking gate.



- Cords on curtains and blinds need to be short or out of reach.
- Some old or antique cots and high chairs are not safe for young children.
- Keep older children's toys (anything with small pieces) away from toddlers.

Car safety

Babies, toddlers and children must be kept safe in cars with properly fitted and approved child restraints or child safety seats. Always stop the car when you need to turn around to attend to your child in the back seat. It is so easy to get distracted and have an accident.

Never leave babies and children alone in the car. They can become seriously ill when temperatures in cars change quickly in summer and winter. Children also get bored and explore the car's knobs and buttons which can be dangerous or they may try to struggle free from their seatbelts and become injured. They may also be in danger of someone trying to steal the car.

Shopping

- Never leave babies and young children alone in the car while you shop.
- Take care when using supermarket shopping carts, as they can tip up, even if you are using the safety seat, especially if a toddler pulls on them.



Traffic safety

Teach your toddler to be safe in traffic by making sure you hold their hand when they are near roads and always cross at a pedestrian crossing.

Teach your toddler about safe ways to cross roads. Remember that while they may begin to remember rules, they are unable to understand them, no matter how many times they are told.

Make sure fences and gates at home are toddler-proof so they are unable to run out onto the road.



Electrocution

- Use an earth leakage circuit breaker in your fuse box or switchboard. It will switch the power off if there is an electrical fault and so prevent injury. It needs to be installed by an electrician.
- Buy covers for powerpoints to stop toddlers poking things into them.
- Don't use electric blankets for young children especially if there is a chance of bedwetting.
- Be careful of electrical appliances near water - it is easy to get electrocuted.
- Put all electrical appliances away after use and use only wall-mounted heaters in bathrooms and install them up high.

Sun

- Whenever possible keep children in the shade. Teach them to play in the shade.
- Make sure their favourite play areas are shaded.
- Children can get sunburnt even on cold, cloudy summer days.
- Sunlight through the glass of car windows can burn the skin.



- In the sun use a hat and clothing that covers arms and legs, such as cover-up bathers.

- Sunscreen can be used in small amounts on young children on areas that are not covered by clothing. Some sunscreens irritate the eyes and sensitive skin.

It needs to be re-applied often. Zinc cream is an effective sun block.

Passive smoking

Avoid smoking in the house, in the car and around children, because when you smoke, children smoke too. Chemicals in cigarettes and tobacco smoke can affect children's health. Children are more likely to smoke if they see you smoking.