

# SAFETY TIPS

## BABY WALKERS

Do not use baby walkers. They can cause serious injury.

## BURNS

Set the temperature on your water heater's thermostat at 120°F or lower. Never leave cups of hot liquids on table or counter edges around small children. Never carry hot liquids while holding your child. Never leave a hot stove or grill unattended. Keep pot handles and curling irons out of reach.

## CAR

**Child passenger safety:** Buckle up every time! Use a child safety seat, booster seat, and seat belt every time your child rides in a car. Never hold a baby in your lap when you are riding in a car. Never put an infant in the front seat of a car with a passenger-side air bag.

**Car seat installation:** Be sure that the car seat is installed correctly. The car seat must be the right kind for your child's age, height, and weight. Always check the manufacturer's specifications that come with the seat. Go to ***Installation Help at the NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) website*** [www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats](http://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats) to find the location of the nearest certified child passenger safety seat technician who will properly install your car seat at no charge.

**Specific requirements:** The safest place for all children under 13 years of age is the center position of the back seat.

- A child younger than 4 years of age should always ride in a rear-facing car seat. However, some children younger than four will outgrow the maximum height or weight limit for their rear-facing car seat and will need to be switched at that time to a forward-facing car seat.
- At 4 years of age change to a forward-facing car seat.
- Once a child has outgrown the maximum height or weight limit for their forward-facing car seat move to a booster seat.
- Children over 4'9" and 80 lbs can usually fit properly in the car's own seat belt. They need to be properly restrained by a lap and shoulder belt. The lap belt should fit low and snug on the child's hips. The shoulder belt must not cross the child's face or neck. Never put the shoulder belt behind the child's back or under his/her arms. Serious injuries can occur when a lap belt is used alone.

**Driveway safety:** Always walk behind your car to make sure that your child is not there before you back out.

## CARBON MONOXIDE

Install carbon monoxide detectors in every sleeping area and check batteries often. Exposure to even low levels of this poisonous gas can be fatal to a small child.

## CHOKING

**General:** Never leave small objects in your baby's reach, even for a moment. Dangerous objects include small toys, latex balloons, marbles, and coins.

**Feeding:** Always watch your baby while feeding. Never leave your baby alone in a high chair. To avoid choking, make sure all foods are soft, easy to swallow, and cut into small pieces. Be careful of choking foods. Some examples include: hot dogs, nuts, hard candy, popcorn, unpeeled and whole grapes, raw carrots, cherries with pits, chunks of meat or cheese.

**Household hazards:** Consider using cordless window coverings to avoid strangulation hazards posed by drapery and blind cords.

## CPR

Learn first aid and CPR.

## CRIBS

Buy a crib that meets all current national safety standards. Corner posts should be 1/16 inch or shorter. Distance between crib slats should be 2<sup>3/8</sup> inches or less to avoid entrapment. The mattress should fit securely in the crib (no more than two fingers of space between crib and mattress) and be free of all plastic wrappings. Current regulations prohibit the manufacture or sale of drop-side rail cribs. If you have an older

## SAFETY TIPS

crib that was made before the new safety standards were enacted, follow the recommendations at the *Healthy Children website* at [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org).

### DROWNING

**Home safety:** Never leave your young child unattended in or near water, even for a second. Don't rely on bathtub rings or other devices to keep your baby afloat. Immediately drain bathtubs after use. Do not leave filled buckets or containers in or around the house. Empty them immediately after use and store them upside down.

**Swimming and water safety:** Teach swimming and water safety. Close supervision is paramount at all times. Always have children wear life jackets on boats.

**Swimming pool:** If you have a home swimming pool, install four-sided isolation fencing (at least 4 ft high fence with a self-closing latch gate) to protect your child from slipping out of the house and drowning before you notice. Pool alarms can also be life-saving.

### ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

Cover all unused electrical outlets with protective devices.

### FALLS

Don't leave your baby unattended on changing tables, beds, or other furniture. Keep one hand on your baby while changing diapers. Use gates on stairways. Remove sharp-edged or hard furniture from the room where your child plays. Install safety guards on windows. Never place a crib or other furniture near a window.

### FIREARMS

If firearms are kept in the house, keep them locked, unloaded, and stored out of reach. Secure ammunition in a separate, locked location.

### HELMETS

Make sure your kids wear properly fitting helmets and other protective gear every time they ride their bikes, scooters, in-line skates or skateboards.

### PHONE NUMBERS

Post emergency phone numbers by telephones. Post phone numbers for the poison control center, pediatrician, police, fire department, emergency medical services, and a neighbor by every telephone.

### POISONS

Make sure household cleaners, medicines, and vitamins are locked up and away from your baby. Use safety latches on drawers and cupboards. Keep poisonous plants out of sight and reach. Seek help if your child swallows a possibly dangerous substance. Call the *Illinois Poison Control Center Help Line* at [1-800-222-1222](tel:1-800-222-1222) or your doctor. Don't make your child vomit.

### SAFETY GATES

Use safety gates. Stair falls tend to result in serious injuries. Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs to keep infants and toddlers out of harm's way.

### SIDS AND SLEEP

Infants should be put to sleep on their backs on a firm crib mattress in their parent's room until age one. Remove all loose bedding, quilts, pillows, stuffed toys, soft objects, and even bumper pads from the crib when your infant is sleeping to reduce the risk of suffocation. Make sure your infant's head remains uncovered during sleep. Infants should not use car seats, strollers, or swings for routine sleep due to the risk for suffocation or airway obstruction.

### SMOKE DETECTORS

Install and maintain smoke alarms (outside bedrooms and on every floor) in your home. Test the batteries on your smoke alarm every month. Change the batteries twice a year. Make an escape plan in case of fire.

### TOYS

Buy only age-appropriate toys for your baby. Small toys and toy parts can choke infants. When in doubt, use a small parts tester that can be purchased at toy or baby specialty stores. Make sure the nursery floor is free from small objects such as buttons, beads, marbles, coins, and tacks. Keep these and other small items out

## **SAFETY TIPS**

of your baby's reach. Toys are frequently recalled for safety reasons. Check out the **Safe Kids Worldwide website at [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)** for updates and information on recent toy recalls.