



The Home Builders

Childproof to Prevent Common Home Injuries

According to recent studies, more babies are born in late summer than in any other time of year, making now a popular time to invest in home child safety devices. Whether you are looking forward to a summertime delivery, or your brood is simply anticipating their summertime vacation, childproofing your house can be relatively simple and inexpensive.

Many common home injuries easily can be prevented with the proper child safety devices. Make sure that devices are installed correctly according to instructions and remind older children of the importance of re-securing any safety devices they've used. To the relief of many cash-strapped parents, it is possible to childproof your home for a fraction of the cost of hiring a professional to do it for you. And child safety devices are conveniently found in local hardware stores, supermarkets, drug stores, baby equipment stores and online. Here are just a few child safety devices that will make your summer a safer one.

- **Lock Out Common Accidents:** One of the easiest ways to prevent injuries is with a simple and inexpensive—you can find these for less than \$2—safety lock or latch. The best kind can be installed easily or used by adults but sturdy enough to handle the wear, tear and pull of little fingers. Securing cabinets and drawers in kitchens, bathrooms and other areas can prevent access to sharp objects or poisonous cleaners. It's also a good idea to get a child's eye view of things. Sit on the floor and see what you can reach or access from the ground. You may be surprised at what your child can get into from such small heights.
- **Gates Make Safety Simple:** Using safety gates throughout your home can prevent painful falls and keep children out of specific areas of the house, such as the kitchen when you are cooking. For areas near the tops of stairs, use safety gates that screw to the wall for more security. Check that the safety devices meet the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA) requirements. There also are new safety gates that fit around fireplaces to prevent burns and custom gate systems to fit any odd-sized areas in your home. A typical safety gate ranges in price from \$13 to \$100.
- **Detection Equals Protection:** For less than \$10, a smoke detector is essential for protecting your family from a fire. The alarms should be located on every level of your home and outside bedrooms. Check your smoke detector monthly to ensure that it's working properly. For a little more (\$30-\$70), a carbon monoxide (CO) detector can help prevent CO poisoning. CO detectors should be placed near sleeping areas, in homes that use gas or oil heat, and in homes with attached garages.

- **Cover it Up:** Little fingers attached to curious bodies can lead to trouble. Protect your child from electrical shock by installing child-resistant covers on all electrical outlets. You can find these devices in any local hardware store for less than \$2. Make sure that outlet protectors cannot be easily removed by your child and that they are too large to be put into interested mouths.
- **Turn Down the Heat:** Help prevent painful burn boo-boos by installing anti-scald devices in shower heads and faucets. These safety devices typically run from \$6 on up. Set your water heater to as low a temperature as possible (120 degrees Fahrenheit or lower), and always test bath water before putting your child into the tub. Never leave a child unattended in the bath tub, not even for a minute.
- **Soften the Blow:** Ever hit your knee on a corner table while not paying attention? Ouch! Now imagine being a toddler. Your home is filled with sharp angles in the guise of tables, chairs and fireplace hearths just itching to be bumped. Corner and edge bumpers can prevent injuries from falls or help soften the blow against sharp furniture or rough edges. Look for corner and edge bumpers that stay secure on furniture and hearth edges; they run about \$30 and up each.
- **Remember Window Safety:** Particularly if your child's bedroom is located on a second level, open windows can pose a potential hazard for young children. Window guards and safety netting can help prevent falls from windows, decks, landings and balconies, because window screens alone will not protect children from falling. Make sure at least one window in each room can easily be used as an escape route in case of fire. Follow installation instructions carefully and check that there is no more than four inches between bars of the window guards. Window safety devices range from a few dollars to \$40 and up.
- **Prevent Access:** One of the easiest ways to prevent accidents from happening in certain areas of your home is to prevent access to them. Door knobs and covers can stop children from entering areas such as kitchens and swimming pools. Make sure door knob covers are sturdy enough to resist children's tugs but allow easy entrance to adults in case of emergency. Place door locks high and out of the reach of small toddlers. Use fences and alarms in addition to locks for extra protection. Sliding glass doors with locks that must be re-secured after opening are often not an effective deterrent for inquisitive children wanting a peek at outside swimming pools, so use safety gates and other barriers with sliding doors. A door knob cover will cost you \$2.50 and up; a door lock can run as low as \$5.
- **Guard Busy Hands:** Busy hands reaching up for pots and pans can easily end up burned. Prevent stovetop accidents with a stove guard, a device that prevents tots from reaching hot burners, pot and pan handles and utensils placed on the stove top. Made of heat-resistant plastic and running around \$30, a stove guard mounts to the front, side or top of your stove with special high-temperature adhesive. Stove knob covers keeps children from being able to turn on both gas and electric stoves, while allowing easy removal by adults. Stove knob covers run between \$7-\$10.

- **Make it Cordless:** Once baby takes his or her first step, the whole house becomes theirs for the exploring. Cordless phones allow you to answer phone calls without having to leave the room and take your eyes off your young Magellan. Cordless phones cost \$30 and up and are especially useful around bathtubs and swimming pools.

These are just some of the home safety devices available on the market today. For more suggestions, visit the U.S.

Consumer Product Safety Commission Web site at www.cpsc.gov.