Babyproofing

HealthySteps®
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A Program of ZERO TO THREE

Sometimes the need to babyproof your home can sneak up on you. It might seem like your baby became mobile overnight. Even babies who can't crawl yet can roll their way into trouble. With that in mind, here are some tips for babyproofing and making sure your home is safe.

Avoid burns and smoke:

- Bring down your water heater temp to 120° F if you can. Always check bath water with your wrist before bathing baby.
- Put gates up in front of heat sources. This includes heaters, woodstoves, and fireplaces.
- Keep curling and flat irons as well as clothing irons (including the cord) out of reach.
- Use caution with candles.
- Smoke outside (including e-cigarettes). Keep lighters and matches out of reach.
- Make sure you have smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Change the batteries once a year and test them every month. Make and practice a fire escape plan.

Avoid falls and injuries:

- Keep guns locked away. Store bullets separately in a secure location.
- Do not leave baby alone unless they are in a safe place like their crib or highchair.
- Make sure all windows are secured. Window guards keep children from falling out.
- Use child-safe padding to protect toddlers from the sharp corners of tables and countertops.

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- Use drawer and cabinet locks to keep knives and other sharp things out of reach.
- Bolt or strap heavy furniture to the walls. Once toddlers can climb, they can accidentally pull things on top of themselves.
- Keep an eye on your children around pets.

Avoid choking:

- Feed your baby in a safe, seated position. Offer small amounts of food cut into small pieces. Make sure choking hazards such as bananas, hot dogs, and bread with peanut butter are in very small (and not round) pieces.
- Always watch your child closely when they are eating. Encourage them to chew their food well to avoid choking. Children under 3 years old should not eat hard or round foods like candy, nuts, or popcorn. (Keep them away from pet food, too.)
- Store anything small enough to be a choking hazard out of reach. This includes coins and latex balloons. Small button batteries for watches and hearing aids are extra dangerous.

Avoid poisons and toxins:

- Store all medicines, poisons, and cleaners out of reach. Post emergency numbers where you can see them. You can also put them into your phone. Be sure to include the Poison Helpline: 1-800-222-1222.
- Avoid using pesticides both inside and outside your home.
- If your home was built before 1978, check the paint for lead. Ask your HealthySteps Specialist about getting a lead test kit if you think you need one.
- Keep your home free of extra moisture. It can increase risk of mold. Using humidifiers can cause this problem and using dehumidifiers can help.
- If your home has a basement, get a radon test. High radon levels are dangerous and need to be addressed.
- Make sure any houseplants are child safe and out of reach.

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Avoid drowning:

- **Never leave a child alone in the bathtub** (see Bath Time article). Even if they are in a bathtub seat, they can easily slip underwater. Babies can drown in less than an inch of water in less than a minute.
- Always empty buckets and tubs of water when you are done with them.
- If you have a pool or other water feature, always choose someone to watch young children closely during swimming time (see Water Safety article). Gated pools are safer, especially if the gates are childproof and have self-latching locks.

SCAN FOR MORE INFO

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