

# Play It Safe

Infant / Toddler edition

A publication of Cabarrus Pediatric Clinic

Accidents are the leading cause of preventable deaths in young children. By following these simple steps you may save your child from harmful injuries or even death.

## Car Safety

- Infants should ride in the back seat, facing the rear, until they reach at least 20 pounds and 1 year of age.
- All children less than age 5 and under 40 pounds must be seated in an approved child safety seat in the car's rear seat (note: children up to 80 pounds are also safer in appropriate size booster seats)
- Roughly half of all car seats are installed incorrectly—review your car seat instructions carefully.
- The rear seat is the safest place for children of all ages to ride. Passenger side air bags can inflate with enough force to injure or kill young children.

## Drowning

- Infants and young children can drown very quickly even in a few inches of water. Never leave water in a bathtub, pail, baby pool or any container.
- Never leave your child alone, even for a few seconds, in the bathtub. Do not answer the phone or the door with your child still in the tub.
- If you have a swimming pool, install a locked fence to separate your house and child's play area from the swimming pool. Be sure that neighbors with pools take the same precautions.

## Burns

- Never eat, drink, or carry hot foods or liquids while holding your baby
- Don't heat your baby's bottle in the microwave as uneven heating may lead to severe burns
- Set your water heater thermostat to 120-125 degrees—hotter temperatures may cause serious scald burns on contact
- Keep your young child out of the kitchen while you cook
- Use the rear burners on your stove and turn pot handles toward the rear so children can not reach them
- If your child does get burned, immediately soak the burned area in cold water and call your doctor
- Install smoke detectors on each floor of your home, preferably outside of each sleep area. Test these monthly and change batteries every 6-12 months.
- Carbon monoxide detectors are recommended if your home has an attached garage, fireplace, or any gas or fuel-burning appliance.
- Cigarette smoking is hazardous to your health in many ways—cigarettes cause more than half of all household fire deaths
- Install plastic plug protectors in all empty electrical outlets

## Poison Control

Keep all medicines, cleaning supplies, and other potential poisons locked and completely out of a child's reach. Remember that many over-the-counter medicines such as fever and pain relievers, vitamins, and cold preparations can be dangerous to children. Bleach and lye products are also particularly dangerous. Post the **Poison Control Center** phone number by your phone **1-800-84-TOXIN**. Keep **Activated Charcoal** and **Syrup of Ipecac** on hand at home. These medicines can be used to reduce the risk of certain poisonings. Do not give either unless instructed to do so by the poison center or a physician.

We encourage all parents to take a C.P.R./First Aid course...

## CPR and Choking

We encourage all parents to take a CPR course. The skills taught in these classes could save the life of your child or another loved one. Call NorthEast Medical Center Ask First (783-1275) for schedules of upcoming classes.

The best approach for choking is to focus on **prevention**. Keep small objects out of reach. Toys or objects small enough to fit inside a cardboard toilet tissue roll are best avoided until after age 3. **Coins, rubber balloons, and small batteries** are particularly high risk. Infants generally do not begin solid foods such as cereals until approximately four months of age. Foods should be strained/pureed consistency until around 9 months when some babies can handle soft finger foods. **High risk choking foods** such as **hot dogs, grapes, nuts, raw carrots, popcorn, and hard candy** should be avoided. Dice all foods into small pieces. Young children should not have chewing gum. Also be sure your child sits down to eat. Choking is more common when children play or run around with food in their mouth. Avoid **long strings** on clothes, pacifiers, crib toys, and window blinds which can strangle a child.

## Falls

- Dangerous falls can occur even before your child learns to sit up or walk.
- Never leave an infant alone on a bed or changing table.
- Place safety gates on stairs.
- Lower your baby's crib mattress before he learns to sit up.
- Never use a **baby walker** as these easily tip over or roll down stairs leading to potentially serious head injuries. Walkers also allow infants to reach and pull dangerous objects or hot liquids onto themselves.
- Remove or pad sharp-edged furniture in the rooms your baby plays in.

## Guns

Unless absolutely necessary, do not keep any guns in your home. A gun in your home is seventy times **more likely to kill a family member** than an intruder. If guns must be kept in the home, they must be securely locked and stored unloaded.