



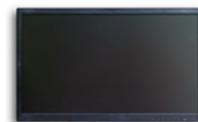
Top 10



HOUSEHOLD SAFETY RISKS FOR KIDS



Everyday items can be big-time hazards for little children. Are you being cautious about some of the worst? Prevent injury - or worse.



Children are hard-wired for curiosity. It's part of how they learn and experience the world. But it also makes a parent's job keeping them boo-boo-free all the more difficult. From electrical outlets to those shiny knobs on the stovetop just begging to be touched, there are hazards in your home from the unexpected to the surprising. To keep your children safe, check these top household risks – and what you can do to minimize them.

Guide written by Kristen J. Gough



1. FLOPPING FLAT

SCREENS. Gone are the days of big boxy television sets. In their place are sleek, slim flat-screen TVs that happen to be top heavy. Your new walker might want to take a closer look at the screen or even touch what she sees. If she pulls on the screen it can fall over if it's not anchored to the wall or properly mounted. "We find that parents don't even realize the TVs have fallen on kids because they're trapped under the TV with their faces pushed into the carpet," says Joann Moss, education coordinator for the Kohl's Injury Prevention Program, or KIPP, through [DMC Children's Hospital of Michigan in Detroit](#). She also cautions parents to be wary of putting TVs in places like bedrooms and basements where kids may be less supervised.

2. HOT KITCHEN STOVES.

"I like to call it the 'no zone,'" says Moss of the area within 10 feet of the stove. "It's the zone where younger kids should not be allowed to get into." Keep kids well away from the stovetop and pans filled with boiling water or other hot items that could easily spill over if a child reaches up at grabs at them. "People don't realize just how far kids can reach onto countertops and stovetops," Moss adds. Besides reinforcing with little ones that they shouldn't go near the stove, consider placing safety knobs on stovetop handles.

KIDS INJURY FATALITY STATS

On average, 12,175 children ages 0 to 19 years die each year in the United States from an unintentional injury, according to the [Centers for Disease and Control Childhood Injury Report](#). The death rate for males is almost two times the rate for females – and higher for boys in general across all age groups. The leading cause of death? Injuries caused by transportation – especially in motor vehicles in traffic.



3. HARMFUL CLEANING PRODUCTS. That same tough-on-grease or wipe-away-mildew product that keeps your bathroom spotless poses real risks to kids. If they ingest the chemicals or even get them on their skin, it can cause serious irritation, injuries and, in some extreme cases, death. Keep cabinets locked up. Better yet, place cleaning products in high places where there's no chance kids can even reach them.



4. FREE FALLING. “Falls are the leading cause of non-fatal injuries for all children ages 0 to 19,” notes the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). “Every day, approximately 8,000 children are treated in U.S. emergency rooms for fall-related injuries. This adds up to almost 2.8 million children each year.” Invest in home safety products like window guards, secure stair gates and guard rails. Window screens aren't enough to prevent kids from falling out if they press against it. Keep windows shut or otherwise protected.



TOP CONCENTRATED DANGERS

Cleaning and other products offer more potent formulas nowadays – so they're also even more of a concern if younger kids get their hands (or mouths) on them. Here are a few newer-to-the-market items to watch.

ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES. Also called e-cigarettes, e-cigs or vape pens, the liquid nicotine in these devices is incredibly strong. Donna Bucciarelli, trauma prevention coordinator at Beaumont Children's in Royal Oak, says one teaspoon of it can be lethal to small children. Other amounts can make them extremely sick.

LAUNDRY PACKETS. The handy, convenient liquid laundry pods, often in colorful shades, can be appealing to kids. Yet wet sticky fingers and the packets are a bad combo – even if the kids don't swallow them, the chemicals can get on their skin or eyes, causing irritation.

DISHWASHER PACKETS. Like laundry pods, detergent packets pose an equally serious risk. Don't keep them anywhere a child might be able to access them.

ESSENTIAL OILS. “These can be very concentrated, depending on what type it is,” Bucciarelli notes. If children mistakenly drink the oils or even put them on their body, they could be harmful.

POWDERED CAFFEINE. Energy drink alternative? Powdered caffeine. The internet product, often sold in bulk, packs a punch. One teaspoon has about the same amount of caffeine as 28 cups of coffee (yes, 28, [according to the FDA](#)). The FDA recommends avoiding it altogether – no matter the age of your child.

LEARN MORE

For even more tips on keeping your kids safe at home, visit the [Child Injury Prevention](#) section of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website.



5. CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING. Sure, you've got smoke detectors, but what about a carbon monoxide monitor? The colorless, odorless gas can be emitted from the stove, fireplace or other indoor sources, causing severe illness or death. Moss recommends parents install carbon monoxide monitors not just in the basement, but all levels of your home. And while you're at it, check the batteries on that monitor and your smoke detectors regularly.

6. DANGLING CORDS. "These days, there are cords everywhere," says Donna Bucciarelli, a registered nurse and trauma prevention coordinator at [Beaumont Children's in Royal Oak](#). Keep cords from blinds out of reach. And take a look around your house for other cords kids might pull, bringing down appliances on their heads – like microwaves, lamps or similar heavy items. Bucciarelli describes another danger: "Toddlers often stick things in their mouths. They can chew on cords that are plugged in and get hurt." Unplug cords when not in use and put covers on those electric outlets.

7. BUTTON BATTERIES. Often used to power calculators, watches, remote controls, cameras, talking books, toothbrushes, toys and more, button batteries are extremely dangerous if swallowed by children. "The coin-sized batteries emit chemicals that can burn the esophagus, burn through the intestines," Bucciarelli says. "If you suspect there's any chance your child swallowed one, call your doctor right away." At home, keep button batteries out of reach – and sight – of children. You should also avoid changing button batteries in front of your child so she doesn't even know there's a possibility of opening that remote control.



THE PURSE MENACE

Injury prevention experts say a household item that can be extremely treacherous for kids is one that many parents never think twice about – a purse. They're stocked with seemingly innocuous items that can hurt inquisitive toddlers, such as:

- Cigarettes
- Hand sanitizer
- Medicine (both over the counter and prescription)
- Coins
- Keys

To avoid accidental injury, always put your purse away as soon as you get home in a place where your child can't get it.

WATCH OUT WHILE VISITING

“It’s important to remind parents that the people they’re visiting may not be used to having kids in the home,” especially during holidays, says Joann Moss with KIPP at DMC Children’s Hospital of Michigan. Grandpa might not have put away the prescription medication on his nightstand, or Aunt Ruth might have cleaning products freely accessible under the sinks. Be especially vigilant. Your well-meaning host or hostess may not be aware of the hazards in their home.



8. FIREPLACES. There’s a screen over the fireplace, so it’s perfectly safe – right? Not quite, notes Moss, who says burns and scalds are one of the top injuries they see at the Children’s Hospital of Michigan. “A fire is real cozy, but it poses a big risk for toddlers, especially when they’re learning to walk,” she says. “They walk and they lose their balance and they can put their hands on the fireplace glass doors, and they’re very hot. It’s important to teach toddlers and children not to touch the glass and to restrict kids’ access to fireplaces.” Burns and scalds can also come from hot liquids (think coffee, tea, soup, pasta water) or tap water from the sink or tub.



9. CRIBS. “Stark and safe go together when it comes to cribs,” says Bucciarelli with Beaumont Children’s, who also serves on the fetal-infant mortality review board for Oakland County. That means the only items in the crib should be your baby outfitted in warm, footed pajamas, placed on his or her back on a tight-fitting mattress sheet over a firm mattress. That’s it. Keep bumper pads, pillows, stuffed animals and other toys out of the crib.



10. HEAVY FURNITURE.

Dresser or jungle gym? Bookcase or ladder? To your toddler, heavy furniture may seem like the perfect place to climb. He can pull out drawers as steps up to the top of the dresser. Or she can work her way up the shelves of the bookcase to reach items tucked at the top. In both cases, the furniture could easily tip over, injuring or suffocating the child. Make sure to secure heavy furniture into the wall so these items can’t be pulled over.

THE NUMBER ONE TIP?

Supervision. “Children are little Houdinis,” says Bucciarelli with Beaumont Children’s. “While you can use all the child-proofing products out there, it doesn’t mean that your child is safe and can’t get into anything; it just slows them down. The best possible thing for a parent to do to prevent injuries is to be present.”



Keep your home safe, tidy, fun – and more.
 Find plenty more tips at MetroParent.com/Home.

