

Health & safety

Making your home safe

"Before Joe was born I never thought about where I left things. Nowadays, everything in the house seems dangerous. I feel I have to follow him everywhere. Yesterday he found my painkillers in the bedroom and nearly swallowed some. It happened so quickly."

- Babies and children learn by exploring their surroundings
- Babies do not know what is dangerous and what is not
- Babies need to be kept safe at home
- Take away any dangers in your home that you can
- Watch your child and keep them away from danger
- Explain about safety to your child from an early age

Babies and young children learn about their world through what they see and touch. This means that, as soon as they are able to, they will crawl, touch and grab at whatever they can see.

They want to find out about things and need careful and gentle help from a young age about what danger is and what to stay away from. Shouting at or smacking children will not teach them about safety. It might just make them scared of the oven or the door.

Most accidents happen in the home and this is why it is important to make sure that your home is safe for all your family especially for young children. There are many cases each year in which children have taken their parents' drugs and medicines.

Some dangers around the home:

- Make sure that all medicines and drugs are locked away well out of reach and your use of them is private to stop your child copying you.
- Certain rooms are full of danger (such as the kitchen) and should stay out of bounds or be made safe by the use of safety devices.
- Are your children safely kept within the house? Is the safety chain high enough on the front door even for a very active toddler?
- Crawling and looking around are an essential part of their development - keep an eye on your young children, especially near wires and sockets.
- Beware of pets around young children. Even trained and good-natured animals can turn on them.
- Make sure that irons, saucepans and hot drinks are kept out of the reach of children. Scalding and burns are common and can be avoided.
- The home you live in is full of dust and this can set off or make worse any allergy your child has such as asthma. Keep your home as dust free as you can.
- Breathing in cigarette smoke is bad for children's health. Children will be affected by passive smoking and your smoking may encourage them to smoke when they are older.
- Check toys for safety labels. Make sure that your child does not play with toys that are not suitable for his or her age, especially if the pieces are small enough to choke on or swallow. Unsafe toys can be very dangerous.

ACTION

Make a list of these dangers and remove them to safety or protect your child from them by using safety devices.

Talk to the contacts listed if you are unsure about this.

WHAT TO SAY

With very young children the tone of your voice and how your face looks as you are saying something are very important. Children will begin to sense the warning tone in your voice and face over time.

WARNING SIGNS

Spend some time exploring your house as if you were a young child. This will show you the many possible dangers which, if not removed, could harm your child.

PREVENTION

Remove dangerous objects like drugs, needles, medicines and household chemicals out of the reach of children and lock them away safely. Do this before your child can be exposed to them.

CONTACTS

- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) 0121 248 2000
- Child Accident Prevention Trust 020 7608 3828
- NHS Smoking Helpline 0800 1690169
- Health Visitor
- Midwife
- Children's Centres:
 - Newport 01983 522469
 - Ryde 01983 617617
 - Shanklin 01983 864897
 - Ventnor 01983 857372
 - West Wight 01983 752175

Check the ACPC website for the latest phone numbers: www.iwight.com/parents