

Childproofing Your Home

To make sure that your home is a safe haven for your children - and you - learn to spot and eliminate hazards throughout the house. This checklist will show you how. Register with ClubMom to customize this checklist by assigning due dates, adding new tasks, scheduling email reminders, and more.

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Safety measures for every room:

- Install child-resistant covers on all electrical outlets.
- Keep dangerous chemicals out of children's reach.
- For strings and ribbons, follow the six-inch rule.
- Always use a safety belt on your baby when she is sitting in a bouncy seat or a swing.
- Shorten curtain and blind cords.
- Place furniture well away from windows.
- Use corner bumpers on furniture and fireplace-hearth edges.
- Place houseplants out of children's reach.
- Know the names of all plants in case a child eats one of them.
- Keep cigarettes, matches, and lighters out of children's reach.
- Safeguard heating and gas systems against accidents.
- Be sure that furnaces, fireplaces, wood-burning stoves, space heaters, and gas appliances are vented properly.
- Place screened barriers around fireplaces, radiators, and portable space heaters.
- Install carbon-monoxide (CO) alarms outside bedrooms to help prevent CO poisoning.
- Install smoke alarms outside each bedroom and on every level of your home.
- Remove the plastic end caps on doorstops or replace the stops with a one-piece design to prevent choking.
- Consider placing plastic guards along the hinge side of frequently used interior doors to prevent the doors from pinching fingers.
- Safety-proof windows and fire exits.
- Make a fire evacuation plan and practice fire escape routes at least twice a year.
- Keep firearms and ammunition safely locked away.
- Secure unsteady furnishings.
- Avoid household water hazards.
- Test homes built before 1978 for lead paint.
- Learn first aid and CPR.

Hallways and staircases:

- Avoid dark hallways and rugs that slip.
- Safety-proof stairs.
- If possible, install carpeting on stairways to protect from falls.

Kids' rooms:

- Position your child's crib away from all drapery, electrical cords, and windows.
- Make sure the crib meets national safety standards.
- Make sure the mattress fits snugly.
- Be sure the crib sheet fits snugly.
- If you use a crib bumper, make sure it's firm (not fluffy) and secured tightly with at least six ties.
- Remove mobiles and other hanging toys from the crib as soon as your child can reach up and touch them.
- Place infants under one year on their backs to sleep.
- Never use an electric blanket in the bed or crib of a small child or infant.
- Place night-lights at least three feet away from the crib, bedding, and draperies to prevent fires.
- Always use a safety belt on your infant when you have her on a changing table, and never leave her unattended.
- Provide padding for falls.
- Check age labels for appropriate toys.
-  Be vigilant about choking hazards.
- Use side railings for children just getting used to "big kid" beds.
- If bedrooms are on second or third stories, be sure to have a fire-escape ladder in each room.

Bathroom:

- Put a lock on the medicine cabinet.
- To prevent poisoning, lock away all vitamins and medicines.
- Install toilet-lid locks to prevent drowning.
- Lower the household water temperature.
- Always test the water first before bathing a child.
- Make sure bathtubs and showers aren't slippery.
- Use electrical appliances carefully.
- Install ground-fault circuit interrupters on outlets near sinks and bathtubs.
-  Never leave a young child alone in the bathroom.

Kitchen:

- Keep knives, cleaning supplies, and plastic bags out of children's reach.
- To avoid fires and burns, never leave cooking food unattended.
- If stove knobs are easily accessible to children, use protective covers to prevent kids from turning them.
- Teach your kids how to respond to fire.
- When they're not in use, unplug electrical appliances.
- Replace any frayed cords and wires.
- Keep chairs and step stools away from counters and the stove.
- Keep activated charcoal (helps absorb some poisons) and syrup of ipecac (used to induce vomiting) on hand.

 Beware of foods that children can choke on.

Yard:

- Store tools, garden, and lawn-care equipment and supplies in a locked closet or shed.
 -  Don't use a power mower to cut the lawn when young children are around.
 -  Don't allow children to play on a treated lawn for at least 48 hours following an application of a fertilizer or a pesticide.
 -  Know the types of trees on the property in the event children ingest berries, leaves, or other plant life.
 - If you have a swimming pool, install a fence (with an automatic childproof gate) that separates the house from the pool.
 - When you barbecue outdoors, never leave kids unattended around the grill.
 - Store propane grills where children cannot reach the knobs.
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Other resources for childproofing your home:

- To find outlet covers, cord shorteners, cabinet latches, and toilet-lid locks, check with your local hardware store.
 - For consumer-product and home-safety information, contact the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.
 - For details about child and home safety, contact the National Safe Kids Campaign.
 - For information about child lead poisoning, read the "Lead Hazard Information" pamphlet from the department of Housing and Urban Development.
 - For information about safe drinking water, contact the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Water.
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