



Child Safety Week 2009: Key facts and safety messages

- Child Safety Week is organised by national charity the Child Accident Prevention Trust www.capt.org.uk/aboutus. It aims to get simple, practical advice to parents about keeping children safe from serious injury, without ‘wrapping children in cotton wool’.
- Child Safety Week 2009 runs from 22 to 28 June. This year’s theme is Safer, Together – asking everyone to think about what they can do to prevent serious accidents, and encouraging families and communities to work together to keep children safer.
- There is more safety advice on the Child Safety Week site www.childsafetyweek.org.uk

Burns and scalds

Facts:

- Hot drinks are the number one cause of scald injuries among young children. Over 500 under fives are rushed to casualty every week because of burns and scalds.
- Hot drinks can still scald a young child 15 minutes after being made.
- It can take just five seconds for a toddler to suffer third degree burns from water from a bath’s hot tap.
- Hair straighteners can get as hot as an iron. And they can stay hot enough to severely burn a young child 8 minutes after being unplugged.
- A baby’s skin is 15 times thinner than an adult’s and is easily damaged.

Key safety messages:

- Keep hot drinks away from small children, and don’t hold a baby and a hot drink at the same time.
- Treat your hair straighteners like you would your iron and always keep them out of young children’s sight and reach.
- Never leave a baby or young child alone in the bathroom, as they may fall into the bath as it’s being filled or fiddle with the hot tap.
- When running a bath, run cold water first and top up with hot. If possible, get a thermostatic mixing valve fitted to your bath hot tap to control the water temperature.

Falls in the home

Facts:

- Around 41,000 under fives are rushed to casualty each year after falling down a flight of stairs – that’s almost 800 a week.
- Almost 2,000 under fives are rushed to casualty every year after falling from buildings.

Key safety messages:

- From when your baby starts to crawl, fit safety gates to stop them climbing stairs or falling down them.
- Fit window locks or safety catches to stop windows opening more than 6.5cm / 2.5".
- Always try to change a baby's nappy on the floor.

Poisoning

Facts:

- Every week, around 500 under fives end up in A & E as a result of suspected poisoning, that's around 70 a day.
- Every day, around 20 children are admitted to hospital because they are thought to have swallowed something poisonous. The under fives are at greatest risk
- In 2007, over two thirds of hospital admissions for childhood suspected poisoning were due to medicines and over a quarter were due to common painkillers such as aspirin
- Some three and four olds can open child-resistant tops within seconds.
- The most common cause of suspected poisoning in the bathroom is cleaner or bleach left beside the toilet.

Key safety messages:

- Keep medicines and cleaning products out of youngsters' sight and reach. Lock them in a cupboard or put them up high away from little fingers.
- Look for household products that contain a bittering agent that makes them taste nasty.

Strangulation, suffocation and choking

Facts:

- Every year a young child dies after getting caught in a blind cord and being strangled.
- One of the biggest causes of choking in young children is running around with food and sweets in their mouths.

Key safety messages:

- Keep the long loops of blind cords away from young children by wrapping them around the hook provided. Or buy a hook cheaply from a hardware shop. If this isn't possible, cut or tie-up curtain or blind cords well out of children's reach.
- Encourage children to sit down when they are eating.

Road accidents

Facts:

- Road accidents are responsible for half of accidental deaths in childhood.
- Over 22,000 children and young people under 16 were killed or injured on Britain's roads in 2007 as pedestrians, pedal cyclists or car passengers.
- Pedestrian accidents peak in the 10-14 age group; 20 young people were killed and 960 seriously injured in Great Britain in 2007. This age group makes up more than 50% of all child pedestrian casualties.

- If hit by a car travelling at 40mph, four out of five child pedestrians will die. If hit by a car travelling at 30mph, four out of five will survive
- The 10-14 age group also have the most cycling accidents. In 2007, 9 were killed, 333 seriously injured and 2,000 slightly injured.
- Head injuries make up a significant proportion of all cycling injuries.
- 9,251 children under 16 were injured as car occupants in collisions in 2007.

Key safety messages:

- Speed is a killer. Adults need to make sure they keep within speed limits, especially in residential areas where children may be out playing.
- Hold little children by the hand or have them on reins or in a buggy when out walking.
- Teach older children about the Green Cross Code and practice it with them while crossing roads. But remember children under nine are too young to cross the road on their own.
- Warn older children about using headphones or mobile phones while crossing roads.
- Children should always wear cycle helmets when out on their bikes.
- Always use child car seats right for your child's age, height and weight until they are at least 135cms in height or reach their 12th birthday, whichever is the soonest.

House fires

Facts:

- In 2006, 15 children died in accidental house fires, 12 of them aged under five.
- You are almost three times as likely to be killed in a fire that starts during the night.
- People without a working smoke alarm are twice as likely to die in a fire.
- Cooking starts almost half of all house fires.
- 6,000 fires a year are caused by children under the age of 10.

Key safety messages:

- Fit a smoke alarm on each level of your home and test them weekly.
- Keep young children out of the kitchen when cooking and don't leave pans unattended.
- Keep matches and lighters out of young children's sight and reach.
- Teach children what to do if the smoke alarms go off and how to dial 999.
- Plan an escape route and practise it with your children.
- In the event of a fire, get out, stay out and dial 999.

Electrical safety

Facts:

- Faulty electrics start up to one in six house fires.
- In a 2007 survey, one in three parents admitted that their children didn't know you should never touch electrical items with wet hands.

- Electrical sockets do not pose a significant threat to young children. Legislation requires all sockets to meet stringent safety requirements. Young children are unlikely to have the dexterity or patience needed to be able to access live parts inside the socket, as they are protected by a shutter. Little fingers won't fit.

Key safety messages:

- Switch off electrical appliances before going to bed – unless, like fridges and freezers, they're designed to be left on.
- Check electrical plugs, sockets and flexes for scorching or fraying, and get them repaired by a registered electrician if there's a problem.
- Don't bring mains-powered electrical appliances such as hairdryers or radios into a bathroom even if they are plugged in outside the room.
- Teach children not to use mains-powered electrical appliances in the bathroom, touch exposed wiring or touch electrical items with wet hands.

Child Safety Week supporters

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- The Scottish Government www.scotland.gov.uk
- Bitrex[®], the bittering agent that deters young children from drinking household cleaning products www.bitrex.com
- The Electrical Safety Council, a charity promoting electrical safety www.electricalsafetycouncil.org.uk

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