

# Childproofing Your Home

### What is childproofing?

Creating a safer place for your child to explore by removing dangers from your home.

Your toddler is learning so quickly. One day, they're not able to get onto the couch. The next, they've found their way up on the couch and are climbing the bookcase beside it. As parents and caregivers all this change is exciting but it can also feel scary.

You can create a safer environment for your child to explore by thinking ahead and childproofing your home.



### TRY THIS

Get down on the floor and crawl around to see things how your toddler sees them. Are there small objects they could choke on? Cords they could get caught in? Heavy items they could pull down?

## Everyday Objects to Watch Out For

**Batteries** can be found in a variety of toys and household items and are choking hazards. Avoid having objects with batteries near your toddler. Button batteries that can be found in watches and other objects can cause significant harm when ingested compared to regular batteries.

**Cords, ribbons and strings** longer than 15 cm (6 inches) can get wrapped around your child's neck. Remove drawstrings from their clothing.

Take cords off blinds and drapes, or tie them up to where your toddler can't reach them, even if they climb on the furniture.

Never put a crib, bed, high chair or playpen near a window or a patio door where a child can reach a blind or curtain cord.

**Purses** can contain coins, mints or medications that don't belong in your toddler's mouth.

**Recycling bins** can contain sharp lids and inky newspapers and magazines that your child might suck on.



### HOW TO Be prepared for an emergency

- Keep emergency numbers by every phone. You may know these numbers, but other caregivers may not. Include 9-1-1, poison control and your health care provider number in the list.
- Learn basic first aid. Contact your local St. John Ambulance, Red Cross or community centre to sign up for classes.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Disposable lighters sold in Canada must be "child-resistant" but this does not mean they are "child-proof." Child-resistant lighters are made so that children have a harder time making them work. Child-resistant lighters may slow children down but they will not stop them.

## Preventing Fires and Burns

- Press the test buttons on your smoke detectors or alarms monthly. Replace the batteries in the spring and fall.
- Install a home fire extinguisher and learn how to use it.
- Set up screens or barriers around fireplaces and inserts. Remember glass on fireplace doors gets very hot and takes a long time to cool down. Keep remote controls for gas or electric fireplaces out of your child's reach.
- Child-resistant lighters are not child proof.
- Set the water temperature in your hot water tank to 49°C (120°F). If you live in an apartment, attach an anti-scald guard to your faucets. Test the temperature of bath water before your child gets in, and make sure they can't turn the taps.
- Create a smoke-free home. Visit [quitnow.ca](http://quitnow.ca).
- Don't hold your child while eating hot food or having a hot drink. And when you put your drink down, make sure it has a tight-fitting lid and is out of your toddler's reach.
- Don't hold your toddler while cooking, and keep them at least a metre (3 feet) from the cooking area.



### DID YOU KNOW?

A young child's thin skin puts them at greater risk of serious burns.

## Preventing Falls and Bumps

- Keep stairs clear and install gates at the top and bottom. (See [Equipment Safety](#))
- Use corner guards or cushioned strips to soften corners and edges on furniture, counters and fireplaces.
- Don't allow your toddler to move around with anything breakable or with a sucker or Popsicle in their mouth.
- Make glass doors visible by adding decals or your toddler's artwork.
- Secure bookcases, TV cabinets and other furniture to the wall with safety screws.
- Move your child into a toddler bed once they try to climb out of their crib or they are 90 cm (35 inches) tall. (See [Equipment Safety](#))
- Consider having changing tables with safety straps.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Because young children have a higher centre of gravity, they're more likely to hit their head when they fall.

## Preventing Window Falls

- Install window guards to prevent your child from falling out.
- Put in window stops so that windows can't be opened more than 10 cm (4 inches).
- Keep furniture away from windows.
- Remember that window screens won't prevent a child from falling out.

## Preventing Poisonings

Most homes contain about 250 substances that can poison a child. Keep these and all dangerous products out of reach:

- alcohol
- cannabis (marijuana), including edibles
- non-prescription opioids and stimulants
- medications and vitamins
- certain houseplants
- pesticides
- moth balls
- diaper pail deodorant disks
- lead (from paints, mini-blinds)
- cleaning products including laundry pods
- personal care products including mouthwash and nail polish
- batteries, especially small, round "button" batteries (like those in watches)

In addition, be sure to:

- Keep all cleaning and personal care products, alcohol, medication, drugs and vitamins in original containers.
- Don't tell your toddler that medicine or vitamins are candy, and don't take it in front of them to avoid confusion.
- Lock liquor cabinets and clear away leftover drinks promptly.

- Store visitors' purses and bags where your child can't get them.
- Use child-resistant packaging, but remember that it's not foolproof.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors.
- Safely dispose of needles and sharp items.
- Safely dispose expired items.

Get more information from the Drug and Poison Information Centre. (See [Poison Control Centre](#) under [Safety](#) in the [Resources](#) section.)



### DID YOU KNOW?

At least one child is poisoned every hour in B.C.



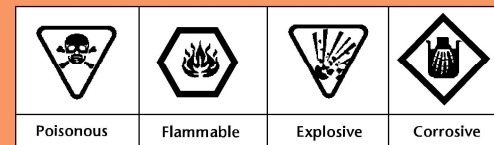
### BE AWARE

Carbon monoxide has no smell or colour but it is very dangerous. Help protect your family by installing a carbon monoxide detector, making sure that appliances, chimneys and vents are regularly maintained, only using charcoal grills outdoors and not using kerosene or propane heaters in enclosed areas.



### DANGER

Teach your toddler that these warning symbols mean "Danger! Don't touch." But don't expect them to remember. Keep all poisons locked up and out of reach.



### If you think your toddler has been poisoned:

1. Call the BC Poison Control Centre immediately at 1-800-567-8911.
2. Tell them what your child took, the amount they took and when they took it.
3. Follow the first aid instructions on the label of the product taken.
4. Call 9-1-1 or go to your hospital Emergency. Take the container with you.



#### DID YOU KNOW?

Most child poisonings occur just before lunch and dinner, when children are hungry and less supervised.



## Preventing Bathroom Injuries

- Turn your water heater down to 49°C (120°F) to help prevent burns.
- Check bathwater temperature on the inside of your wrist before putting your child in. The water should feel warm, not hot.
- Never leave your toddler alone in the bathroom.
- Supervise your toddler every moment they're near or in water. Have everything you need for bathtime on hand before you put your child in the tub.
- Don't use a bath ring or bath seat as a substitute for supervision.
- Teach your child to sit, not stand, in the tub.
- Drain the tub as soon as bathtime is done. If you use a portable tub, turn it upside down so it doesn't collect water.
- Don't let your toddler play with the taps.
- Keep all medications, cosmetics, cleansers, hair appliances and personal care products out of your child's reach.
- Lock low cupboards.
- Use non-slip bath mats in the bathtub and shower.
- Use a toilet seat lock and keep the lid closed.

## Preventing Kitchen Injuries

- Store knives, forks, scissors and other sharp items out of reach.
- Make the area near the stove an off-limits zone.
- Turn pot handles inward and use back burners rather than front.
- Keep a fire extinguisher handy.
- Be careful when cooking with hot oil.
- Unplug small appliances.
- Place beans, nuts and other choking hazards out of reach.
- Secure tablecloths.
- Keep the dishwasher locked and the soap container empty until ready for use.
- Lock your chest freezer.
- Don't use small fridge magnets that your child could swallow or choke on.



#### FAMILY STORY

After watching me plug in things that make noise, my 18-month-old tried to poke a paper clip into an outlet. I put outlet covers on all the electrical outlets that same day!



#### KEY TAKEAWAY

**Nothing is completely childproof.** Safety latches and child-resistant caps make it more difficult for children to open cupboards and bottles, but they don't make it impossible. Keep harmful items locked up, out of sight and out of reach.