

# 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, she's not able to get onto the couch. The next, she's found her way up on the couch and is climbing the bookcase beside it. As a parent, all this change is exciting. But it can also feel scary.

You can create a safer environment for her to explore by childproofing your home.



### TRY THIS

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



### HOW TO

#### Be prepared for an emergency

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

## Everyday Objects to Watch Out For

**Cords, ribbons and strings** longer than 15 cm (6 inches) can get wrapped around your child's neck. Remove drawstrings from her clothing. Take cords off blinds and drapes, or tie them up to where your toddler can't reach them, even if she climbs on the furniture.

**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.

## Preventing Fires and Burns

- Press the test buttons on your smoke detectors or alarms monthly.
- When you change your clocks in the spring and fall, replace the batteries in your smoke detectors or alarms.
- Completely screen fireplaces and inserts.
- 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 she can't turn the taps.
- Create a smoke-free home. Visit [quitnow.ca](http://quitnow.ca).
- Don't have a hot drink while holding your child. And when you put your drink down, make sure she can't reach it.

## 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.
- Install window locks.
- Don't allow your toddler to walk around with anything breakable or with a sucker or Popsicle in her 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.

## Preventing Poisoning

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

- alcohol
- cannabis (marijuana)
- medications and vitamins
- plants
- moth balls
- diaper pail deodorant disks
- lead (from paints, mini-blinds)
- cleaning products including laundry pods
- personal-care products

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 them in front of her.
- 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 monitors.

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



### BE AWARE

Help protect your family from carbon monoxide poisoning 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 her 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 she took, and when she 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 Mishaps

- Supervise your toddler every moment he's near or in water.
- Keep all medications, cosmetics, cleansers, hair appliances and personal-care products out of your child's reach.
- Lock low cupboards.
- Use non-skid bath mats in the bathtub and shower.
- Install a toilet seat lock and keep the lid closed.

## Preventing Kitchen Mishaps

- Store knives 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.



### FAMILY STORY

After watching me plug in things that make noise, my 18-month-old, Justin, 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.