

## **Childproofing Your Home**

One of the most important steps you can take to protect the health and life of your child is to “childproof” your home. Perhaps the best way to do this is to take a “baby’s eye view”, crawling from room to room will help you to spot the sharp corners, uncovered electrical wall outlets and extension cords, hanging cords to lamps and other appliances, and loose objects which might easily fall.

The following is a quick checklist for childproofing each room in your house. Remember, however, that every child and home is different. Check your home carefully, **AND NEVER LEAVE YOUR BABY UNATTENDED!**

### **CHILDPROOFING BABY’S ROOM**

1. Hang mobiles and dangling toys out of reach so that baby can’t strangle on the string. The string should be no more than 12 inches long.
2. Diaper pails can be dangerous to curious babies: many have drowned in soaking pails. Keep the cover on the pail.
3. The various baby powders and talc’s can be dangerous. Never use them near a fan or allow the baby to play with the container—he could choke on the dust.
4. Do not put plants in baby’s room if there is any chance baby could reach them.
5. Store ointments, creams, safety pins and all other baby paraphernalia out of reach.

### **CHILDPROOFING THE KITCHEN**

The kitchen is one of the most hazardous areas in the house, especially when you are cooking

1. Turn handles of all pots and pans to the back of the stove so that baby can’t reach them. (The best way to avoid accidents

is to keep your baby in his playpen or highchair while you cook).

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2. Avoid using tablecloths that can be pulled down.
3. Keep all appliances and their cords away from the edge of counters or table tops. All cords should be coiled up and tied.
4. Place safety latches on kitchen cupboards. If you have room, you can let your baby have one cupboard of his own filled with pots, pans and large plastic bowls
5. Cleaning products and all other toxic substances should be stored in a high cupboard with a lock or safety latch.
6. Keep knives and all cutleries in a drawer or cupboard out of your baby's reach.
7. Try to keep bits of food off the floor. Especially food that your baby could choke on.
8. If you drop a glass on the floor and it breaks, protect your crawling baby's hands and knees by first vacuuming and then using a wet paper towel to get any remaining slivers.
9. Whenever you are handling hot liquids, check to see where your baby is **BEFORE** you pick up the tea kettle or pan. You do not want to trip and spill boiling water on your baby.
10. Teach baby from the *very beginning* that the stove is off limits whether it is on or off.
11. Jagged edges on boxes of aluminum foil or plastic wrap can cause cuts; keep them out of reach.

## **CHILDPROOFING THE LIVING ROOM**

1. Plan on putting away all delicate, breakable, and valuable items from tables and shelves until your baby is well past the curious/destructive stage (4 to 5 years old.)

2. Check the floor area daily for small objects that baby could choke on: pins, small bits of food such as popcorn, peanuts, etc...
3. Tables with sharp corners and edges can be protected with rubber corner guards.
4. Bookcases are great attractions for your babies. Fastening it to the wall will keep your baby from pulling a bookcase over on top of himself.
5. Cover unused electrical outlets with plastic caps. You can also obtain boxes that will cover outlets that are being used. Where possible, place furniture in front of outlets.
6. Never leave extension cords plugged in where your baby can find and chew on them and be seriously burned or shocked. Tape any excess cord down so baby won't be so interested.
7. Heaters, whether electric space heaters or wood stoves, can present serious hazards to a young baby. Make sure heaters are well ventilated and are protected by safety guards.
8. Telephones are fascinating to curious babies—make sure the cords are out of reach, so that the baby doesn't pull the phone down on his head. If you put the phone on the floor, try putting a wide rubber band over the switch hook points so the phone line is not on when the receiver is lifted. You can still receive calls while the baby plays, but you won't have any unexpected long-distance phone bills.

## **CHILDPROOFING THE BATHROOM**

The bathroom is especially dangerous because it usually contains medicines, drugs, and other potential poisons.

1. Keep all medicines and drugs in a locked cabinet out of your baby's reach. Aspirin is one of the most common causes of childhood poisoning. Be careful to return all drugs to the cabinet after you use them.
2. Shampoo and soap should also be kept out of baby's reach.

3. Hairdryers should always be kept unplugged to avoid electric shock if they should be pulled or dropped into water.
4. To avoid burns, lower the thermostat on your hot water to 120 degrees Fahrenheit (48.9 degrees Celsius). Always check water temperature before putting your baby into the water or under a faucet.
5. Your baby will find the wastebasket full of interesting things. Be aware of what you throw away and put pills, razorblades, etc. in a special wastebasket that is out of baby's reach.
6. Babies have drowned in toilet bowls - *always leave the lid down*. High rubber stops on the lids will prevent his fingers from getting caught if he should happen to lift and then drop the lid.
7. A hook on the outside of the bathroom door or a plastic door knob cover may be necessary to keep the door closed and the baby out of the bathroom.
8. Use plastic or paper cups and containers in the bathroom so there is less chance of broken glass.

