

June is Home Safety Month!

The Home Safety Council has designated the 2008 safety campaign theme as “**Hands on Home Safety.**” In recognition of this program we ask that you take some simple hands-on steps to create a safer home environment from the five leading causes of home injury – **falls, poisonings, fires and burns, choking/suffocation and drowning.** Please read and keep in mind the following important safety items.

Follow these recommendations to prevent falls

Have handrails on both sides of stairs and steps.

Make sure stairwells are sufficiently lighted.

To avoid tripping, tape small rugs to the floor or don't use them at all. Keep stairs clear of tripping hazards.

Illuminate bedroom, hall and bathroom with nightlights.

Put bright lights over porches and walkways.

Fix broken or chipped steps as soon as possible.

Put a non-slip mat in the tub and shower. Install grab bars in the tub and shower.

Wipe up spills as soon as they occur.

Special concerns for children:

Make sure to install safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs.

Use window guards to keep children from falling out of windows.

Put a thick layer of mulch, wood chips or other absorbent material under playground equipment.

Follow these recommendations to prevent poisonings

Know to call 1-800-222-1222 if someone takes poison. Keep this number next to the phone.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a deadly gas that you can't see or smell. The gas collects when fuels are burned. Have a service person check heaters, stoves and fireplaces every year to see that they work well. Install a CO detector near bedrooms.

Read the labels of the products you use in your home. If they have the words, "caution, warning, poison, or danger" keep them out of reach of children and lock them away. If you have children make sure that you put safety caps on all chemicals, medications and cleaning products.

Keep products in their original containers so you can identify them.

Follow these recommendations to prevent burns

Electrical receptacles (outlets) in kitchens, bathrooms and other wet areas should be protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI). GFCIs help reduce electrical shock injuries. An electrician can tell you if your home's wiring needs to be updated for safety.

Always stay in the kitchen when you have something cooking on the range and give it your full attention. If you must leave the range for a moment, turn down the heat first and return quickly. Teach older children who are learning to cook burn prevention tips.

Roll up sleeves when cooking and avoid reaching over burners and other hot surfaces.

Keep children well away from the cooking area and place hot pans and cookie sheets away from the edges of counters where children can reach them.

Use heavy oven mitts and hot pads when cooking.

Learn how to prevent and extinguish a small pan fire.

Keep electrical appliances such as toasters, radios, and hairdryers, away from the sink and tub. If an appliance falls into water, un-plug it immediately, never reach into water to retrieve it.

Store matches, lighters and candles up high, ideally in locked cabinet, so young children cannot reach them.

Treat a minor burn injury immediately with cool running water for 3-5 minutes. Do not apply ice, which can harm the skin. Do not apply butter or lotions, because this can keep the skin temperature hot, increasing the injury. Apply a sterile bandage to the injured area. If the burn is serious, seek medical treatment immediately.

If your clothing catches fire remember the phrase, "STOP, DROP and ROLL." This can save your life and limit your burn injuries. Stop where you are. Drop to the floor. Roll over and over to smother the fire. If someone else's clothing catches fire, help them by telling them to stop, drop and roll. If they attempt to run, use a heavy rug or blanket to try to stop them and use it to smother the flames if you can do so safely.

-Have an escape plan and practice it. Go over your plan with your family. Post your plan where everyone can see it. Test your smoke alarm monthly. Practice your escape drill late at night too. Make sure everyone goes to the safe meeting place outside. Remember in an actual fire to call 911 from outside.

Follow these recommendations to prevent choking/suffocation

Place infants on their backs in cribs and make sure the sheet and mattress fit tightly to avoid entrapment and suffocation.

For safe sleep, your child's crib should be empty. Take away all soft bedding, pillows, toys and stuffed animals from the crib.

Look around your home for anything small enough to fit through a toilet paper tube such as coins, marbles, grapes, etc. These things could cause a young child to choke.

Carefully watch children when they are playing and eating. Do not let children under the age of 6 eat small, round or hard foods, such as hot dogs, grapes or popcorn. If you do, cut them into very small pieces.

The Home Safety Council recommends against the use of latex balloons in homes with your children. If the balloon breaks and a child swallows a small piece, it could be very dangerous.

Read toy labels. If your child is younger than the age on the label, do not allow them to play with that toy.

Never hang pictures, quilts or decorations containing ribbon or string on or over a crib.

Window blind cords can present a serious strangulation hazard. Move cribs and playpens away from windows. Tie up window cords out of a child's reach. If your blind cords have continuous loops, call 1-800-444-6742 to request free repair kits to make them safer or cut it in two.

Pull out drawstrings in children's clothes. Make sure your child takes off any necklaces, purses, bicycle helmets and scarves before they play or go to sleep.

Make sure that children under 6 do not sleep on the top bunk of raised beds. Verify that spaces between the guardrail and bed frame, as well as the head and foot boards, are less than 3.5 inches.

Follow these recommendations to prevent drowning

Always stay within touch supervision – keeping kids within an arm's reach -- when your children are around standing water at home. This includes buckets, bathtubs, toilets and spas.

Always supervise young children during bath time. Never allow older siblings to supervise children in or around standing water.

Drain the bathtub immediately after using.

Be sure all buckets are emptied immediately after use and turned over with the opening face down.

Store large buckets out of children's reach