

The 10 Child Safety Devices You Need in Your Home

Did you know that you can childproof your home for a fraction of what it would cost to have a professional do it? Child safety devices are available at hardware stores, baby equipment shops, supermarkets, drug stores, home and linen stores, and through mail order catalogues.

Here are 10 child safety devices you need to help prevent injuries to young children.

1. Safety latches and locks - use on cabinets and drawers to help prevent children from gaining access to medicines and household cleaners, as well as knives and other sharp objects.

Look for safety latches and locks that adults can easily install and use, but that are sturdy enough to withstand pulls and tugs from children. Safety latches are not a guarantee of protection, but they can make it more difficult for children to reach dangerous substances. Even products with child-resistant packaging should be locked away, out of reach. A safety latch or lock usually costs less than \$2.00

2. Safety gates - use to help prevent falls down stairs and keep children away from dangerous areas. Look for safety gates that children can't easily dislodge, but that adults can open and close without difficulty. For the top of stairs, gates that screw to the wall are more secure than pressure gates.

New safety gates that meet safety standards display a certification seal from the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA). If you have an older safety gate, be sure it doesn't have "V" shapes that are large enough for a child's head and neck to fit into. A safety gate will cost from \$13.00 to \$40.00

3. Doorknob covers and door locks - use to help keep children away from places with hazards, including swimming pools. Be sure the doorknob cover is sturdy enough not to break, but allows a door to be opened quickly by an adult in case of emergency.

By restricting access to potentially hazardous rooms in the home, doorknob covers could help prevent many kinds of injuries. To prevent access to swimming pools, door locks should be placed high out of reach of young children. Locks should be used in addition to fences and door alarms. Sliding glass doors, with locks that must be re-secured after each use, are often not an effective barrier to pools. A doorknob cover usually costs about \$1.00 and a door lock usually costs \$5.00 and up.

4. Anti-scald devices - use for faucets and shower heads and set your water heater temperature to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to help prevent burns from hot water. An anti-scald device will cost from \$6.00 to \$30.00

5. Smoke detectors - use on every level of your home and near bedrooms to alert you to fires. Smoke detectors are essential safety devices for protection against fire deaths and injuries.

Check smoke detectors once a month to make sure they're working. If detectors are battery-operated, change batteries at least once a year or consider using 10-year batteries. A smoke detector usually costs less than \$10.00.

6. Window guards and safety netting - use to help prevent falls from windows, balconies, decks, and landings. Check these safety devices frequently to make sure they are secure and properly installed and maintained. There should be no more than four inches between the bars of the window guard.

If you have window guards, be sure at least one window in each room can be easily used for escape in a fire. Window screens are not effective for preventing children from falling out of windows. A window guard or safety netting usually costs from \$8.00 to \$16.00.

7. Corner and edge bumpers - use to help prevent injuries from falls against sharp edges of furniture and fireplaces. Be sure to look for bumpers that stay securely on furniture or hearth edges. A corner and edge bumper usually costs \$1.00 and up.

8. Outlet covers and outlet plates - use to help protect children from electrical shock and possible electrocution. Be sure the outlet protectors cannot be easily removed by children and are large enough so that children cannot choke on them. An outlet cover usually costs less than \$2.00.

9. Carbon monoxide (CO) detector - use outside bedrooms to help prevent CO poisoning. Install CO detectors near sleeping areas in your home. A carbon monoxide (CO) detector usually costs from \$30.00 to \$70.00.

10. Cordless phone - use to make it easier to continuously watch young children, especially when they're in bathtubs, swimming pools, or other potentially dangerous areas. A cordless phone costs \$30.00 and up.

You don't need to spend a lot of money to childproof your home. But you do need to do it now.

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Joan Yankowitz publishes the popular consumer and business "Kwik eGuides" at <http://www.kwikguides.com>. Instantly download "How to Keep Your Child Safe" Kwik eGuide at http://www.kwikguides.com/child_safety.htm