

# June 2008 Health Bulletin Safe Proofing Your Home

June is **National Home Safety Month**. Celebrate this month by safe proofing your home to protect you and your family. Keep you and your family safe from **poisoning, fires, and falls** by following some general safety tips.

## POISONS

Understanding the importance of poison prevention can be a case of life or death for you or one of your family members. One of the most important things a person can do to prevent accidental poisoning in the home is to become educated about what poisons are and how to prevent accidental poisoning.

Poisons are any substance that can cause harm or unintentional symptoms. Every thirty seconds a child suffers poisoning in the U.S. Sixty percent of all poisoning occurs in children under the age of six. Common household poisons include: personal care products, cleaning products, cough/cold medicines, pain relievers (aspirin), plants and mushrooms, foreign bodies (batteries), ointments and creams, insecticides and rat poison, antimicrobials (antibiotics), and hydrocarbons (gasoline, kerosene). Taking a few extra minutes to do a poison safety checklist will prevent you or your family from becoming a statistic.

## CHECKLIST:

-  Move cleaning supplies from under the sink to shelves or locked cabinets.
-  Move medicines to a locked cabinet.
-  Keep plants up away from children.
-  Keep harmful materials in their original containers.
-  Put bug sprays and lawn chemicals in a locked cabinet.
-  Install carbon monoxide detectors in your home.
-  Keep cigarettes and cigarette butts away from children.
-  DO NOT leave children unattended.
-  Keep household cleaning materials away from food and water sources.
-  Make sure all harmful substances have child proof caps.
-  Keep the number for the poison control center near the phone.

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## **FIRE§**

Each year millions of Americans lose their lives to household fires. Taking a few extra minutes to do a fire safety checklist will prevent you or your family from becoming a statistic.

### **CHECKLIST:**

- Install smoke detectors in your home.
- Have a fire escape plan.
- Place fire extinguishers in the kitchen and other rooms of your house. Make sure you know how to use them and frequently check expiration dates.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Run electrical cords along walls, not under rugs.
- Turn off appliances when not using them.
- Never overload outlets and extension cords.
- Never store flammable liquids near heating units.
- Keep space heaters away from combustible materials such as rugs and curtains.
- Keep flammable materials, such as aprons and dish towels, away from stoves.
- Never wear loose clothing near a stovetop while cooking.
- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Heat oil slowly.
- If a pan catches fire, carefully place a lid over the pan and turn off the heat.
- Do not reach over burners when they are in use or still hot.



## **FALLS**

Anyone in your home is at risk for a fall, but falling is the leading cause of death and injury in the elderly. Taking a few extra minutes to do a fall safety checklist will prevent you or your family from becoming a statistic.



### **CHECKLIST:**

- Do not use throw rugs.
- Keep pathways, such as stairs, well lit at night.
- Keep electrical cords off the floor.
- Use a sturdy stepladder when reaching high shelves or other out of reach areas.
- Install rubber mats or skid proof mats in your bathtub.
- Keep clutter off the floor.
- Keep outdoor walking paths well lit at nighttime.

Source:  
National Safety Council (2007). Home Safety. Available online at <http://www.nsc.org>.

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