

## **SEAHURST PEDIATRICS SAFETY INFORMATION**

### **1. When Baby Comes Along**

Your child depends on you for everything - love, food, clothing, and a safe home to live and play in. Newborns don't get around much, but in a matter of months, your child could be crawling. That's why it pays to thoroughly check your home for unsafe objects and places before your baby discovers them for you.

#### **SLEEP SAFETY**

Infants spend a lot of time sleeping, so parents should pay special attention to any crib where baby slumbers, including those in the homes of baby-sitters, friends, and relatives.

New cribs should meet strict safety standards. Plan to purchase a new crib that carries a safety certification seal. Contact the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission at (800)638-2772 or visit them at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) for information on recalled cribs and other products.

What about hand-me-down cribs? They're a sound financial move, but they must be safe. Measure crib slats. They should be no wider than 2 3/8" apart, otherwise your baby's body could squeeze through them and become trapped. There should be no gaps between the crib mattress and the sides of the crib. Be sure there are no corner posts over 1/16 of an inch above the end panels, so a baby cannot catch his or her clothing and strangle.

For any crib, all screws, bolts, and other hardware must be in place and tightened to ensure the crib is structurally sound. In addition, mattress support hangers should be securely attached to the end panels and mattress support of the crib.

Always keep the rails up when your baby is in the crib. To reduce the risk of suffocation and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), infants should always sleep on their backs. Remove all soft bedding from the crib, including pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed animals, and other toys.

#### **CHILD SAFETY**

Be sure crib sheets fit snugly on the crib mattress. Loose sheets can entrap a baby, increasing the risk of strangulation. Locate the crib away from a window blind or curtain cord for the same reason.

A safe crib is the best sleeping place for baby. Avoid placing your child on a bed. It's easier than you think for an infant to become entrapped and to fall and to suffocate in soft bedding. Likewise avoid laying an infant on a water bed, bean bag, or anything soft enough to cover his face.

Your child's sleep wear should fit snugly and be made from flame resistant fabric to reduce the risk of burns, should there be a fire in the house.

## CAR SAFETY SEATS

Start your baby off right by using a properly installed infant car seat for his trip home from the hospital (buckle yourself in, too!). Babies require rear-facing car seats until they weigh at least 20 pounds and are at least one year of age and they should ride in the back seat at all times. The present recommendation is to keep infants in a rear facing car seat until 2 years of age. To prevent serious injury, never place your child in a rear-facing car safety seat in the front seat of your vehicle and don't place children next to active side air bags unless the car manufacturer states it's safe. No matter what, never travel by car with an infant in your arms-or anything else other than in the car seat.

Read the manufacturer's directions for using your car seat and the car owner's manual for installation information. Test the seat for a snug fit by grasping at the base and trying to move it side to side and towards the front of the car. It shouldn't move any more than an inch side to side or toward the front of the car. Your car manufacturer's manual can tell you whether you need a locking clip to prevent movement of the car seat. Tethers, straps that connect the car safety seat to the car, provide extra protection. Newer cars are required to have upper tethers. Tether kits are available for most older car safety seats, so check with your car manufacturer.

Passenger Safety Technician (CPS) can check car safety seat installation for free. To find the nearest CPS, call the National Highway and Transportation Safety Association's Auto Safety Hot Line at (888)327-4216 from 8 AM 10 PM, E.S.T. or visit them at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov).

What about second-hand car seats? They may look secure, but they must satisfy the following conditions: 10 years old or less; never been in a car crash; have a label stating the date of manufacture, the seat name and the model number; comes with instructions; has no cracks in the frame; and has no missing parts. If you are unable to verify all of these conditions, don't use a second-hand car seat.

Car safety seats should not be placed in a shopping cart (and don't allow older children to stand in shopping carts, either). Thousands of children are hurt every year by falling from shopping carts or when carts tip over.

## FALLS

When or where an infant will first roll over is anyone's guess, so the only safe place for unattended babies is in the crib or playpen; always keep the sides up and locked in place. Never leave your baby alone on your bed or other high places, such as a sofa or changing table. When at the changing table, always keep one hand on your baby during diaper changing. Have

everything out and ready before you begin to prevent reaching or the need to leave your child unattended.

## BURNS

Be careful when warming infant formula or breast milk in bottles. Microwave ovens can heat formula unevenly and burn your child. Placing the bottle under hot running water or in a container of heated water for a few minutes is usually adequate. Always check the temperature of the formula or breast milk on your wrist before feeding to your baby.

Dial down your hot water heater to 120° F to prevent scalding at the tap. Always check the temperature of baby's bath water with your forearm or the back of your hand first and never let go of your baby during a bath.

## CHILD SAFETY

To avoid burning yourself and your infant, put your baby down when carrying hot foods and liquids. Plates and cups can be fascinating for a baby and he may try to grab hold, spilling the hot contents all over both of you.

Keep your entire family safer by installing smoke detectors on each floor of your home and near sleeping areas. Test the batteries on the first day of each month, and change them on the first day of spring and fall. Keep ashtrays, matches and lighters out of baby's reach. Do not allow your baby to play near fireplaces, radiators or space heaters, and never leave barbecue grills unattended or hot oven doors open, even for a moment.

## GET THE LEAD OUT

Lead ingestion can result in developmental delays and irreparable brain damage in infants and children. Lead is rarely found naturally in water, but it can get into your tap water through corrosion of plumbing materials, and into the infant formula you prepare for your baby. Very old and poorly maintained homes may be more likely to have lead pipes, joints, and solder. However, new homes are also at risk because so called legal "lead-free" pipes may contain up to 8 percent lead. Call the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800)426-4791 to find a certified lab in your state that can test the tap water in your home.

The greatest exposure to lead is swallowing or breathing in lead paint chips and dust. Older homes, and old toys and cribs may contain lead paint. Follow lead removal guidelines when renovating a home with lead paint.

## 2.ON THE MOVE

Your child's world becomes more dangerous as he or she becomes more mobile. Always be on the lookout for hazards at your baby's eye level. Try crawling around on your hands and knees to get a good look at potentially unsafe places, objects and electrical cords. You'll be surprised what baby can get into!

### CHOKING

Once babies discover their mouths, it seems everything they touch goes into it. Keep toys made for older children out of their reach, as well as small objects including marbles, beads, buttons, paper clips, marker and pen caps, small erasers, coins, balls, safety pins, balloons, and candy.

As your baby begins eating solid foods, strap him or her into a secure high-chair and always supervise meals. Your baby won't be eating table foods right away, but when she does, cut them into chunks no larger than 1/2 of an inch. To prevent choking, children should not eat the following foods until at least age four:

- o Nuts and seeds
- o Popcorn
- o Raw vegetables
- o Raisins and other small dried fruit, such as cranberries
- o Whole grapes
- o Fresh or frozen blueberries
- o Melon balls
- o Marshmallows
- o Large chunks of meat and cheese
- o Hot dogs
- o Chunks of peanut butter and  
other nut butters
- o Hard candy and cough drops

o Chewing gum

o Jelly beans, gum drops, gummy bears, and other sticky candy

Never allow your child to run, walk, play or lie down when eating. To be on the safe side, contact your local Red Cross or American Heart Association for information about CPR classes.

## ELECTRICAL HAZARDS

Your baby may not have the run of the house yet, yet it's never too early to place Outlet Plates and Plug Protectors on electrical outlets. Make sure the outlet protectors are not easily removable by children and are not choking hazards.

Babies like to see what happens when they pull on things, so keep electrical cords out of sight and secured. Replace all frayed, broken, or worn electrical cords. Unplug all appliances after using them. Fold up ironing boards and put the iron away after using.

## FALLS

Babies love exploring new places. Make your child's adventures safe by blocking all stairways with safety gates that fit snugly. If you're in the market for safety gates, purchase a brand that carries a certification seal from the Juvenile Product Manufacturers Association (JPMA). Use safety gates that screw into the walls at the top of stairs.

Always use safety belts and never leave your baby unattended when they are in danger of falling-in a high chair, infant seat, swing or stroller. Use corner and edge bumpers to prevent injuries from falls against sharp edges of furniture and fireplaces. While playpens can help children avoid falls by keeping them from hazardous areas, playpen time should be limited. The safest playpens use mesh measuring less than 1/4" that's securely attached and has no tears or loose threads. Always keep the playpen sides up and locked.

## BATH TIME SAFETY

Babies often enjoy splashing around in the tub. To keep bath time pleasant and safe, stay within arm's reach of baby. It only takes a few seconds and a few inches of water (even in toilets) for babies to drown, so resist the urge to answer the doorbell or the telephone. Even the sturdiest infant bath seat or supported ring is no match for adult supervision, although a rubber bath mat may limit slips and falls in the tub.

## POOL SAFETY

If you have a swimming pool, it should be surrounded by a climb-resistant fence measuring at least four feet high that prevents direct access to the pool from the house. Anyone who supervises your child around pools or any body of water should know CPR and have ready access to a phone and rescue equipment.

## BURNS

Get in the habit of turning the cold water off last. This will prevent a hot metal faucet from burning little fingers. And, during the cold winter months, block your baby's path to heat registers, ducts or portable heaters.

It's okay to warm baby foods in the microwave oven, if you follow label directions carefully. Always check the temperature of the food by tasting it yourself first.

## CAR SAFETY

When your baby weighs at least 20 pounds and is over one year of age, begin using a forward-facing car seat placed in the back seat - the safest place in your car. Some newer car and van models are equipped with built-in infant seats which may be used for children who are at least one year of age and weigh a minimum of 20 pounds. Check with the vehicle manufacturer for details. An Auto Roller Shade will help you keep your baby comfortable in the car on sunny days. Never leave baby alone in any vehicle for any reason.

## HIDDEN DANGERS

If your baby can sit in his crib or push up on his hands and knees, it's time to remove toys hung across the crib rails, mobiles and decorative crib bumper pads. A squeaky door can be intriguing to a little creeper. Door stops can keep little fingers from being pinched. Keep children away from decorations or other flammable materials, such as Christmas tree lights and lit candles.

## 3. POISON LOCKOUT

More than a million children under six are poisoned each year. Household products, including cosmetics, personal care products such as toothpaste, cleaning substances, pain relievers, and plants are to blame in most cases. Listed below are some of the more obvious household poisons. Take stock of your cabinets and throwaway what you don't need. Store all cleaning products, insecticides and medicines in their original containers and in places where your child can't reach them. Use Drawer Latches and Door Knob Covers to keep all others locked safely away.

- o Ammonia

- o Alcohol (rubbing, alcoholic beverages, etc.)

- o Anti-freeze
- o Bleaches
- o Air fresheners
- o Batteries
- o Cleaners
- o Detergents
- o Fertilizers
- o Drain and toilet cleaners
- o Furniture polish
- o Gasoline
- o Kerosene
- o Lighter fluid
- o Lye
- o Medicines
- o Paints
- o Paint removers thinners
- o Rat poisons
- o Windshield washer fluid
- o Plants, house & outdoor, including: azaleas, cherry trees, diffenbachia, hemlock, holly, ivy, jimson weed, mushrooms, oleander, philodendron, rhubarb
- o Cosmetics (including nail polish removers and home permanents)

CARBON MONOXIDE -- THE INVISIBLE POISON

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous, colorless and nearly odorless gas produced by faulty furnaces, ranges, water heaters, room heaters, and running cars and other vehicles. Everyone should have carbon monoxide detectors/alarms in their homes and recreational vehicles. Install a CO detector/alarm in the hallway near every separate sleeping area in your home. Always open the garage door before starting up your car.

#### CLEAN IT UP.

- o Be alert when using medicines or cleaners. Many accidental poisonings occur while the substance is in use, so play it safe and don't take medicine or use cleaners when your child is in the room.
- o Store all cleaning products, insecticides and medicines in their original containers and in places where your child can't reach them, preferably in high, out-of-sight, locked cabinets.
- o When you must store toxic items under the sink, use safety latches that lock every time you close the cabinet.
- o Watch your child closely when away from home. Check your baby-sitter's home and all other care givers' homes to see that medicines, cleaners, and other harmful substances are kept under lock and key.
- o Keep medicines in child-resistant packaging. Check to be sure grandparents and baby-sitters also buy their medicines in child-resistant containers.
- o Never call medicine "candy." In fact, take all medicine out of sight of children, since they may try to copy you. Iron containing medicines, such as children's vitamins and mom's prenatal vitamin supplements, are among the leading causes of child poisonings.

Sometimes, despite your good efforts, your child may be exposed to a poison. If this happens:

- o Have the poison control center telephone number or hospital emergency room telephone number by the phone. Fast action saves lives.
- o Take your child and the poison to the telephone when you call for help.
- o Tell them your child's age and what poison you think was involved. Follow the poison control center or hospital emergency room instructions.

#### **4.ACTIVE TODDLER**

Walking babies can do so much, but they know 50 little about protecting themselves from danger. Young children can be quick and quiet, so you'll need to be especially alert as your baby becomes a toddler.

Toy chests can be particularly hazardous unless they have a lid that opens in any position so tiny necks are not caught by a slamming lid, thereby creating a strangulation hazard. Also, check that the lid doesn't shut tight trapping a child inside.

Do not allow a child to play with balloons or plastic bags. Knives and scissors should be locked securely away. Drawer latches and cabinet locks can keep dangers out of reach. Keep window cords out of reach of cribs and other furniture children climb on; children like to put their necks through loops. Cut open the loop on your window and blind cords and add a tassel at the end of each cord. Keep the cords out of reach.

## TOYS

Choose toys that are safe for your child. The age guidelines printed on packages are there for safety reasons and do not refer to a child's ability to play with a toy. Watch for sharp edges and small pieces on any toy - they can come off and a small child could swallow them. Children can be very hard on toys, so check toys regularly to be sure no small pieces could break off easily.

## OUTDOOR SAFETY

Teach your child where it is safe to play in the yard, but never leave him unsupervised. Check the grounds for poisonous plants and other hazards. And just in case an emergency occurs, know CPR and first aid.

Fence in outdoor play areas, especially if you have a pool of any kind or a hot tub. Always keep the pool gate locked, as well as any doors that access your pool from inside the house. Locks should be placed out of the reach of children. Consider putting alarms on doors leading directly to the pool area. Teach children to enter water feet first to determine the depth (never dive in without knowing the water's depth). Children should wear flotation devices, such as life preservers or life vests when around water, but remember, flotation devices are not a substitute for adult supervision. Remove all water from pails and buckets to prevent drowning.

Apply sunscreen, even on cloudy days, several times during the day. Plan outdoor activities for early morning and late afternoon, when the sun's rays are not as strong, and encourage children to play in shady areas. Dress children in protective clothing whenever possible, including hats with brims and sunglasses. Keep infants in covered carriages and strollers.

Light colored clothing makes children less attractive to insects, including mosquitoes. Use insect repellent that contains 10%-17% DEET on infants and older children to repel mosquitoes and ticks.

## BATH KITCHEN HAZARDS

In the bathroom, unplug and coil the cords of hair dryers, curling irons, electric shavers, and other bathroom appliances when they're not in use. Store appliances out of sight so they don't end up in the tub with your young bather. Use Toilet Lid Locks to safeguard your curious toddler.

In the kitchen, turn pan handles toward the back of the stove when you're cooking and use back burners when possible. Keep hot pans out of reach. Do not leave a child alone in the kitchen when food is cooking.

### **5.EAGER INDEPENDENCE**

Teach your child how to cross streets safely and about traffic dangers. Never let him cross the street unattended.

Watch your child carefully on the playground. Kids don't realize how dangerous some of their "really neat tricks" can be.

See that your child takes a swim class. After age four, most children are developmentally ready for formal swimming classes. Being comfortable and familiar with water can help prevent panic in an unsafe situation. Instruct your child not to run around, water, not to push or "dunk" others, and never to depend on inflatable toys as life preservers. Never let your child swim alone. Even children who are comfortable in the water can find themselves in life threatening situations.

Put away ladders and other outdoor tools as soon as you are finished. Don't leave the lawn when children are nearby.

### **PERSONAL SAFETY**

Begin teaching your child to be cautious around people they don't know and not to talk to strangers. If your child likes to go "exploring" when you shop at the mall together, use a Safety Hand strap or Harness to keep your child close by.

### **FALLS**

In your home, active children climbing and jumping can also lead to slips and falls. Keep chairs away from counters. Install guards on windows. And, if you haven't already get a non skid mat for the bathtub.

**THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR CLOSE OBSERVATION AND CAREFUL ATTENTION**