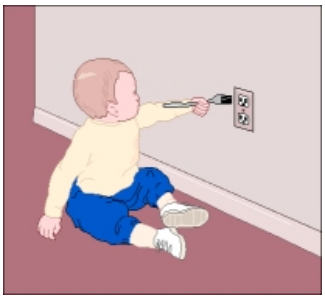
Making a Home Safe for Children

Almost 40% of emergency department visits are due to injuries that occur in the home. Here are some suggestions to reduce these occurrences.

- Keep all medicine in a safe place. **This includes vitamins**. They can be toxic in high doses. Read all medication labels closely before giving to a child.
- Know your caregiver's phone number and also the number of the poison control center.



- Use socket protectors in electrical outlets to guard against electrical injuries.
- Never allow electrical appliances in bathrooms where children bathe. This includes radios in bathrooms with teenagers.
- Keep electrical cords out of toddlers reach.
- To prevent burn injuries always check bath water temperature with your hand or elbow before bathing a child. Maintain water heater temperature thermostats at 120° F (48.9º C) or below.
- Never leave a child alone in a bath or water no matter the depth of water or length of time you plan on being gone, even just to take a quick phone call.
- Maintain current checks on smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Keep cigarettes locked away, preferably out of the house. Eating nicotine can be deadly to a toddler or baby. One cigarette butt can kill a baby. Second hand smoke is a common cause of repeat upper respiratory and ear infections in children. Do not smoke in a home with children.

- Keep lead paint areas in a non-peeling condition or refinish with non-lead paint.
- Keep all handles towards the back of the stove when cooking. Do not leave climbing aids for children near stoves.
- Post important telephone numbers such as:
  - Health caregiver
  - Ambulance
  - Hospital emergency room
- Have available important health information such as:
  - Immunization records, lists of allergies, present medications, and significant health problems.
- Always leave written permission with your caregiver, baby sitter, or clinic in your absence. This is so needless delays will not occur in an emergency.
- *Information courtesy of ACEP (American Academy of Emergency Physicians)*

1-800-446-9144 The Home Organizers for Medical Emergencies. You can also access ACEP on the World Wide Web at: http://www.acep.org/

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