

TIP SHEET: Home Safety

For the parent

As a parent, you always want your child to be safe. Accidents can happen in a matter of seconds, so it is important to prepare for what you can and prevent accidents from occurring in your home. If an accident does happen, don't hesitate to call 911 for emergency help.

Here are a few tips to keep your child safe at home:

- Place safety latches on all doors and cabinets, especially where cleaning products and medicines are located.
- Secure windows, block stairways and lock doors.
- Dispose of any plastic grocery bags and dry cleaning bags immediately; these can cause suffocation.
- Never leave a child unattended near water, even for just a few seconds. If the phone or doorbell rings while your baby or young child is in the bathtub, pick him up, wrap him in a towel and take him with you.
- For newborns, keep your baby's crib as bare as possible. An infant's nose and mouth can be covered accidentally by soft fluffy pillows, comforters or stuffed animals, restricting her ability to breathe.
- Childproof your home from electric shock by covering unused electrical sockets with plastic covers, repairing damaged appliances or electric cords and keeping electronics out of your child's reach.
- Make sure small household items, such as coins, buttons, jewelry, small balls and pins, are stored away from a child's reach to avoid accidental choking. Don't select toys with many small parts. Look for labeling on toys with small parts that warn they are not safe for children under 3 years old.
- If you have a pool in the backyard, it's important to fence it on all sides and make sure it is high enough so a child can't reach it.
- No matter how well you childproof your home or try to prevent accidents, one of the best things you can do is prepare yourself for an emergency. Keep important numbers near your phone such as poison control, your pediatrician, your work and cell phone numbers, and a neighbor or nearby relative.
- For their general safety, children should be taught their name, your name and to stay with you when you go places together. If they get separated from you, teach them not to wander away and to ask for help from a store clerk with a nametag or uniformed law-enforcement/security officer. Make sure your children understand that they should never look for you on their own or with someone else, even these "helping" adults.

