



child accident
prevention trust



5-7s

top safety tips
for parents and carers

Between 5–7 children start to feel more 'grown-up' but they're not ready to do many of the things adults do. They may understand the idea of danger but can't be relied on to understand consequences – especially when distracted or excited.

Older children in this age group may be ready to start learning how to do basic household tasks but will still need adult supervision.

Find out how you can protect your 5–7 year-old from accidents.

Out and about

Children at this age are not able to judge speeds and distances accurately. This means that they are still too young to cross roads safely on their own or to cycle in traffic. It is important to start teaching road safety rules, but you cannot rely on children to fully understand them or follow them at this age.

- ✎ the law says that children under 135cm (about 4ft 5in) in height must use an appropriate child car seat or booster seat on every car journey, even short ones
- ✎ always use a car seat or booster seat that is appropriate for your child's age, height and weight. When your child's eyes are above the level of the back of the child car seat, it is time to move to a booster seat
- ✎ make sure the seat is fitted into the car properly and your child is strapped in correctly
- ✎ if your child is more than 135cm tall, they can use an adult seat belt, but a booster seat may help the seat belt lie on the child's body properly
- ✎ teach children to cross roads safely. Make learning about road safety a fun experience as children learn best when enjoying themselves
- ✎ don't let children cross the road alone



- ✎ set a good example when crossing roads, so your children don't learn bad habits from you
- ✎ encourage children to wear cycle helmets at all times when riding their bikes – this creates a good habit for when they are ready to start riding on the roads
- ✎ don't allow children to ride bikes in traffic at this age.

Falls

At this age children have lots of energy and often want to run everywhere, and treat everywhere as a play area. They may also be keen to prove their helpfulness by carrying younger brothers and sisters around, but can easily fall with a young child in their arms.

- ✎ teach children to walk and hold the hand rail when going up and down stairs
- ✎ never let children play on stairs and encourage them not to leave toys or other things on stairs
- ✎ teach children not to play close to windows, to avoid them falling or climbing out
- ✎ if you have a balcony, never let children play there or go out alone. And don't let them climb or lean over the rails
- ✎ don't let children of this age carry younger children – especially on or near stairs.

Burns and scalds

Although they are able to climb out of baths at this age, 5–7s are still at risk of burns if they fall into a very hot bath. They may accidentally burn a younger child if asked to bathe them or are left alone to share a bath with them – as they may play with the hot tap.

- ✎ for the safety of all younger children, get a thermostatic mixing valve (TMV) fitted to your bath hot tap. This controls the temperature at which water comes out. If it isn't possible to fit a TMV, run the cold water first and add hot water afterwards
- ✎ never leave a 5–7 year-old to bathe a baby or share a bath unsupervised with a younger child
- ✎ when cooking, make sure you use the rings at the back of the cooker and turn saucepan handles towards the back so they can't be grabbed or knocked over by active children.

House fires

If your home catches fire, you and your child could breathe in the poisonous smoke. It's especially dangerous if the fire breaks out during the night while you're all asleep.

- ✎ fit smoke alarms at every level of your home and test the batteries every week
- ✎ change the batteries every year or get alarms that have ten year batteries, are wired to the mains or that plug into light sockets
- ✎ make sure you always put cigarettes out properly
- ✎ don't leave lighters and matches lying around. Once your child reaches seven, you may want to start teaching them how to light matches safely under your supervision. This makes matches less fascinating
- ✎ at night, switch off electrical items, wherever possible before going to bed and close all doors to contain any fire
- ✎ practice with your child how you will escape from your home if there's a fire, so you all know what to do if the alarm goes off
- ✎ teach older children in this age group what to do if a smoke alarm goes off – but never rely on children to escape on their own.

Drowning

Children start to feel confident about swimming and being in water at this age, and may over-estimate their abilities. They are also likely to forget instructions, so need adult supervision around water.

- ✎ never leave children under eight alone in or near water
- ✎ choose safe places to swim – such as public pools where there are trained lifeguards
- ✎ teach your child to swim. But don't rely on arm bands or swim jackets to keep your child safe. They are designed to help a child learn to swim – not to keep them afloat
- ✎ teach your child not to run at the edge of swimming pools.

Choking and suffocation

The biggest risk of choking comes from children running around with food in their mouths. They may also strangle or suffocate themselves if playing with ropes or plastic bags, so be careful about what you leave lying around.

- ✎ teach children not to run with food and sweets in their mouths
- ✎ avoid giving peanuts to children under 6. If a child chokes on peanuts these will release an oil which can cause damage to the child's lungs
- ✎ don't leave ropes and cords lying around
- ✎ keep plastic bags of all types out of reach and sight so they can't be played with and end up over a child's head.



Cuts

There are tasks children can start learning to do under supervision – like buttering and cutting bread with a round-ended knife – but they are probably not safe to handle sharper implements like bread knives until they are older.

- ✎ keep scissors, knives, razors and tools out of reach. Teach children how to use items like scissors and knives safely – and supervise them when they use them
- ✎ use safety glass in low glass doors and windows or cover panes with safety film.



We strongly advise parents and carers to learn first aid.

For further information on first aid and first aid courses contact

British Red Cross www.redcross.org.uk

St John Ambulance www.sja.org.uk

St Andrew's www.firstaid.org.uk

capt is a charity
committed to reducing
childhood injury.



Canterbury Court (1.09),

1-3 Brixton Road, London SW9 6DE

t 020 7608 3828 f 020 7608 3674

e safe@capt.org.uk w www.capt.org.uk

registered charity number 1053549

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