



child accident  
prevention trust

# how safe is your child in the garden?










a safety guide for parents and  
carers of young children



Each week 2,500 children under 14 go to hospital after being injured in the garden.

Find out how by following a few simple safety tips you can make your garden a safer place for children.

## General safety tips

-  make sure young children can't get onto roads or get into neighbours' gardens. Keep gates shut and bolted and check hedges or fences to make sure there are no gaps
-  fill in your garden pond – they make great sandpits. If you can't fill them in make sure they are fenced off or covered. Babies can drown in as little as 5cm (2 inches) of water and drowning is silent, so you may not hear any noise or struggle
-  remember to lock garden tools away in a shed or other secure area. Never leave electrical equipment plugged in when not in use
-  keep all chemicals – such as weed killer or fertiliser – locked away, or high up, out of reach and sight of children
-  always keep chemicals in their original containers – transferring them into food jars or drinks bottles can confuse you, and your child
-  keep young children away from lit barbeques or bonfires and remember that barbeques stay hot long after you have finished cooking
-  keep greenhouse doors locked when not in use, to prevent your child getting at tools or poisonous chemicals that may harm them. When buying a new greenhouse, always look for one made with safety glass or plastic
-  if you have a water butt, make sure it has a secure cover to help prevent drowning
-  try to keep paths, patios and steps clean and well maintained to help avoid trips and falls.

## Plants

Very young children tend to put things in their mouths so make sure they are closely supervised in the garden.

As children get older it's a good idea to teach them never to eat anything growing in your garden or in the countryside unless you tell them it's safe to do so.

- ✎ avoid buying plants for the house or garden that may be harmful to children. In particular, small children may be attracted by berries. Try to avoid all plants with berries until children are old enough to understand that they may be dangerous
- ✎ don't choose prickly plants as they can damage children's eyes
- ✎ fence off any poisonous plants or trees that are already in your garden. If they drop berries or seeds make sure you clear them up regularly.

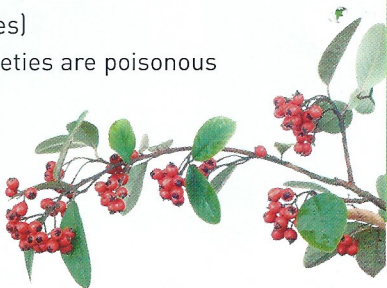
## If you think your child may have eaten a poisonous plant:

- ✎ remove any remaining parts of the plant from your child's mouth
- ✎ do not try to make them vomit
- ✎ ring your doctor, the accident and emergency department at your local hospital, or NHS Direct tel 0845 4647 (England and Wales); NHS 24 tel 08454 242424 (Scotland) keep a sample of the plant and take it with you if you go to the doctor or hospital.



## Plants that can cause sickness

- ✎ bluebells (root bulbs)
- ✎ honeysuckle (berries)
- ✎ delphinium (all varieties are poisonous but not fatal)
- ✎ lupin
- ✎ lily of the valley
- ✎ privet
- ✎ rhododendron
- ✎ snowdrop
- ✎ wisteria
- ✎ potato plant (all parts except the potato itself)
- ✎ rhubarb (leaves and when raw)
- ✎ laburnum (seeds and pods)
- ✎ cotoneaster (berries)
- ✎ pyracantha (berries)
- ✎ mistletoe
- ✎ holly (berries and leaves)



## Poisonous garden plants

- ✎ cherry laurel
- ✎ deadly nightshade
- ✎ woody nightshade
- ✎ foxgloves
- ✎ yew
- ✎ alder buckthorn
- ✎ bryony
- ✎ ivy with berries
- ✎ monkshood



There are charts and books that show you what these plants look like. Take this list with you when you go shopping for plants and if you are unsure ask a garden centre for advice.

For more detailed information go to [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)

[www.capt.org.uk](http://www.capt.org.uk)

## Helping in the garden

Most children like to help out or copy what you are doing in the garden, be it planting, watering or picking flowers and fruit. Whatever job they are doing, make sure they are using tools that are suitable for their age – or get a children's gardening set so they can work alongside you.

Don't allow children in the garden when chemicals are being used, or let them help with mowing the lawn.



## Playing in the garden

Adequate supervision, coupled with these simple safety tips, can make your garden a safer place for your children to play.

- ✎ empty paddling pools immediately after use. Babies can drown in as little as 5cm (2 inches) of water and drowning is silent, so you may not hear any noise or struggle
- ✎ look for safety labels when buying play equipment like swings and climbing frames
- ✎ trampolines should be placed on soft, energy-absorbing ground and should only be used by one child at a time. Try to buy one that comes with safety netting, otherwise think about buying a safety cage to use with it to reduce the chance of falls
- ✎ check play equipment regularly for loose nuts or bolts
- ✎ position climbable equipment over something soft like a mat or well watered grass. Never put it over paving or concrete
- ✎ make sure children wear cycle helmets when riding tricycles and bicycles
- ✎ keep the washing line well above children's heads and away from play equipment.

**We strongly advise parents and carers to learn first aid.**

**capt** is a charity committed to reducing childhood injury.

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