



child accident
prevention trust



toddlers and up

top safety tips
for parents and carers
of pre-schoolers

www.capt.org.uk

Toddlers are keen to explore their surroundings but don't understand what might hurt them. They may repeat warnings back to you so you think they understand, but they don't.

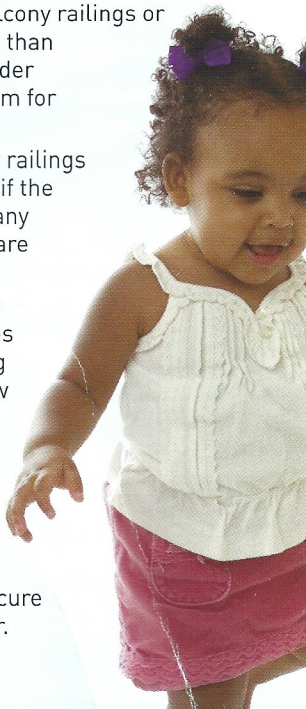
Every day lots of pre-school children are rushed to hospital because they've been hurt in accidents at home or out and about.

Find out how you can keep your little one safe.

Falls

Although toddlers are unsteady on their feet, they can move very fast. But they have no sense of danger. They will tend to trip over or try to climb things. This means they are very prone to falling.

- ✎ fit safety gates to stop your toddler climbing stairs or falling down them. Safety gates are for children under two years
- ✎ begin teaching your toddler how to climb stairs but never let them go up or down on their own. Remember even four year-olds may need some help
- ✎ gaps between bannisters, balcony railings or open windows should be less than 6.5cm wide if your child is under 18 months and less than 10 cm for children 18 months or over
- ✎ cover bannisters and balcony railings with boards or safety netting if the gaps are too wide. Board up any horizontal stair rails as they are easy to climb or slip through
- ✎ keep low furniture away from windows and fit safety catches or locks to stop them opening too wide. Make sure you know where the keys are in case of fire
- ✎ don't use a bunk bed for your pre-schooler – they are not recommended for children under six years old
- ✎ use a five point harness to secure your toddler in their highchair.



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 on every level of your home
- ✎ 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
- ✎ keep matches and cigarette lighters out of young children's sight and reach
- ✎ make sure you always put cigarettes right out
- ✎ at night, switch off electrical items wherever possible before going to bed and close all doors to contain any fire
- ✎ practise how you will escape from your home if there's a fire, so you know what to do if the alarm goes off. Keep your escape route free of clutter.

Burns and scalds

A toddler's skin is much thinner than an adult's and will burn or scald much more easily. Remember toddlers want to fiddle with and touch everything.

- ✎ test the bath water with your elbow before putting your child into the water – it should not feel either hot or cold. We advise that you have a thermostatic mixing valve fitted to your bath hot tap to control the temperature of the water that comes out of it to stop your child being badly scalded
- ✎ use a kettle with a short or curled flex
- ✎ 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 by little fingers
- ✎ if possible, it's best to keep your toddler out of the kitchen – well away from things like hot kettles, saucepans and the oven door when it's hot. You could put a safety gate across the doorway
- ✎ keep hot drinks well away from young children
- ✎ hair straighteners get as hot as your iron and toddlers are at risk from burns from them. Keep hair straighteners out of reach when you are using them and put them in a heat proof pouch or on a high shelf to cool. Avoid ironing with your toddler around in case they tug on the flex.
- ✎ fit fireguards to all fires and heaters and use a spark guard too if you have a coal or wood fire.

Choking and suffocation

Toddlers can easily choke – even on something quite small like a grape. They also tend to put everything in their mouths.

- ✎ cut large food up so it's small enough for little mouths and don't give young children hard food like boiled sweets
- ✎ don't give young children peanuts. They contain aracus oil which can give an allergic reaction that can stop your child from being able to breathe. Peanuts should not be given to children under six
- ✎ supervise children eating and encourage them to sit still
- ✎ keep small objects like coins, buttons or small parts from older children's toys away from toddlers
- ✎ keep plastic bags of all types out of reach and sight of young children so they can't be played with and end up over a child's head.

Strangulation

Toddlers can strangle themselves playing with cords. They are also prone to getting their heads stuck when they squeeze their body through small gaps. This can be particularly dangerous if they are off the ground as it could lead to a child hanging or accidental strangulation.

- ✎ always keep blind cords and chains tied up out of reach for example on a cleat hook. Move your child's bed, highchair or playpen away from window blinds
- ✎ try to watch your pre-schooler's play and discourage them from trying to squeeze through rails or banisters
- ✎ keep garden play equipment well away from washing lines.

Drowning

Toddlers can drown in quite shallow water – typically in baths and garden ponds. Remember that drowning is silent – you won't necessarily hear any noise or struggle.

- ✎ never leave young children alone in the bath – even for a second
- ✎ empty the bath as soon as you've taken your child out
- ✎ fence off, fill in or securely cover your garden pond if you have one
- ✎ watch toddlers in paddling pools or playing near water
- ✎ empty paddling pools straight after use
- ✎ put covers on water butts
- ✎ make sure your garden is secure so that your child can't get into next door gardens where there may be ponds or other drowning hazards.

Poisoning

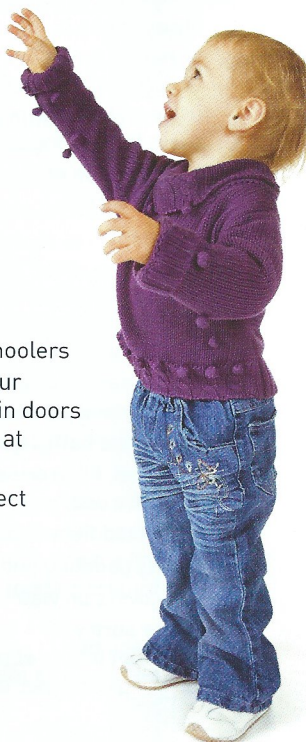
Toddlers like putting things in their mouths to see what they taste like. They will also find all sorts of ways to reach things they think are sweets.

- ✎ keep all medicines, including everyday painkillers, locked away or high up out of reach and sight
- ✎ keep cleaning products (including liquid tabs) high up out of sight and reach or, if necessary, fit safety catches to low cupboard doors where they are kept.
- ✎ Try to choose cleaning products that contain a bittering agent, like Bitrex®. It helps to prevent children swallowing the contents as it makes them taste horrible
- ✎ make sure bottle tops and lids are firmly closed when not in use
- ✎ fit carbon monoxide alarms wherever there is a flame burning appliance (such as a gas boiler) or open fire. Carbon monoxide is poisonous. You can't see it, smell it or taste it. Also, make sure that your appliances are serviced regularly and that ventilation outlets in your home are not blocked
- ✎ check your garden for poisonous plants and teach children not to eat anything they pick outdoors until they have checked with an adult.

Cuts, bumps and bruises

Toddlers just don't understand about danger and while minor cuts, bumps and bruises are part of growing up, serious accidents involving, for example, knives or glass can be dangerous.

- ✎ use safety glass in low glass doors and windows or cover panes with safety film
- ✎ keep scissors, knives and razors out of reach of pre-schoolers
- ✎ use door guards to protect your child's fingers being trapped in doors but remember to close doors at night to stop fire spreading
- ✎ use corner protectors to protect your child's head from sharp corners on furniture.



Out and about

By law, young children must always be put in proper child car seats when travelling in the car – even on short, local journeys. Outdoors, toddlers can be holding your hand one moment and gone the next.

- ✎ always use a car seat that is right for your young child's age, height and weight
- ✎ make sure the seat is fitted properly in the car and that your child is securely strapped in the seat
- ✎ never leave your toddler alone in the car. Even strapped in, they may fiddle with window or door controls
- ✎ never allow a child under five on the street without a grown-up
- ✎ use a five point harness to secure your toddler in their pushchair
- ✎ use a harness and reins when out walking with your young child, or hold their hand tightly
- ✎ set a good example when crossing the road on foot by choosing a safe place and talk to your child about what you are doing.

For more helpful safety tips, visit our website www.capt.org.uk

We strongly advise parents and carers to learn first aid

capt is a charity committed to reducing childhood injury.



**Canterbury Court (1.09),
1-3 Brixton Road,
London SW9 6DE
e safe@capt.org.uk
w www.capt.org.uk**

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