

JANUARY - MARCH 2024

CHILD ACCIDENT PREVENTION NEWSLETTER



FACTS

- Under-5s are particularly at risk of being injured in home accidents, with falls accounting for the majority of non-fatal accidents and threats to breathing such as suffocation, strangulation and choking causing the highest number of deaths.
- Most home accidents are preventable through increased awareness, improvements in the home environment and greater product safety.
- The most severe injuries are associated with heat related accidents and falls from a height. Older children are more likely to sustain fractures than younger counterparts.³ Younger children have a higher percentage of burns and scalds as well as poisoning and ingestion
- The largest number of accidents happen in the living/dining room.³ However, the most serious accidents happen in the kitchen and on the stairs. Every year more than 67,000 children experience an accident in the kitchen - 43,000 of these are aged between 0-4 years; 58,000 children have accidents on the stairs.

ICE SAFETY

Children are attracted to frozen lakes, canals and Lochs as they present natural play opportunities. Ice, however, can be a serious hazard in the UK in the winter. We most often hear of people falling through the ice as a result of incidents with dog walkers, ramblers, and members of the public where it is used as a walking route/shortcut, or through play.



If you see a person in the water:

- Call 999 and shout for help
- Stay off the ice: Help from the land to the best of your ability. Try to keep your eyes on the person at all times, especially in moving water
- Shout to the casualty to keep still to maintain heat and energy, use a calm reassuring voice if possible: Float To Live
- Look for rescue equipment or anything that will extend your reach such as a rope, pole, branch or item of clothing.
- Reach or throw out to the casualty with it. Gently guide and move the person to the shore. Make sure that you are on stable ground.
- Keep the casualty warm and make sure they go to hospital.

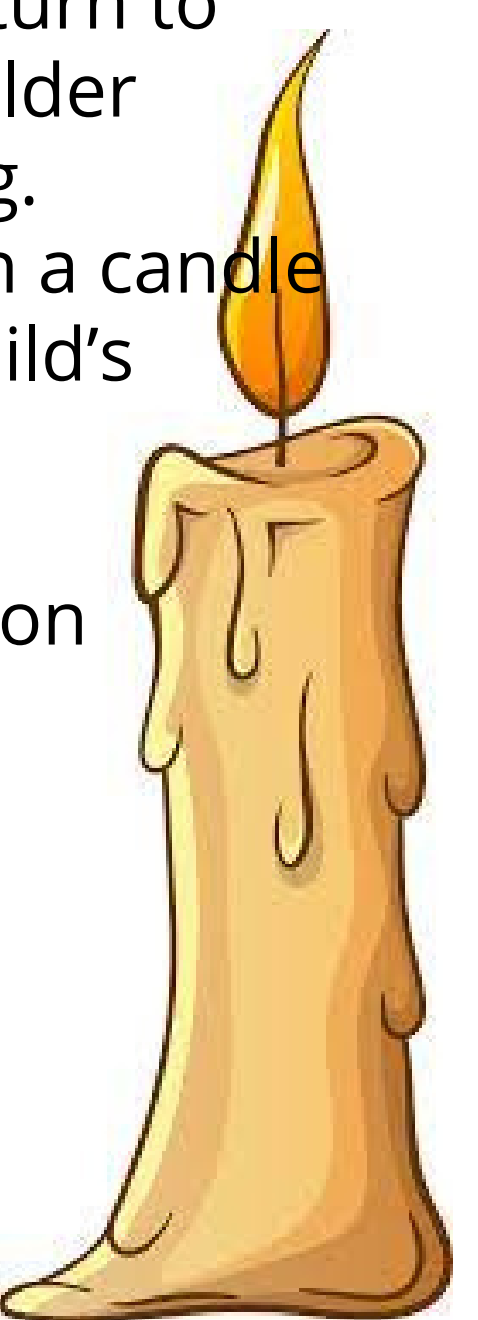
SAFETY IN THE HOME



CANDLE SAFETY

- Always put candles on a heat resistant surface and in a proper holder.
- Be especially careful with night lights and tea lights, which get hot enough to melt plastic. TVs are not fire-resistant objects
- Put them in a proper holder. And keep them out of draughts
- Don't put them under shelves. It's easy to forget that there's a lot of heat above a burning candle.
- Keep clothes and hair away.
- Candles should be out of reach of children and pets
- Keep candles apart. Leave at least four inches (10cm) between two burning candles
- Take care with votive or scented candles. These kinds of candles turn to liquid to release their fragrance, so put them in a glass or metal holder
- Don't move them when they're burning. Don't leave them burning. Extinguish candles before you leave a room. Never go to sleep with a candle still burning. And never leave a burning candle or oil burner in a child's bedroom
- Use a snuffer or a spoon to put them out.
- Double check they're out. Candles that have been put out can go on smouldering and start a fire. Make sure they're completely out.

www.fireservice.co.uk



Preventing burns and scalds

- Turning the saucepan handles away from the edge of the counter or cooker and using the back rings keeps them out of reach of little hands.
- Kettle cords are also a temptation, but if you push the cord to the back of the worktop, or use a kettle with a short or curly flex, you will be able to keep them out of reach.
- Hot drinks can easily be knocked over or grabbed by little fingers, and a cup of tea can burn even 15 minutes after it's been made. Try to get into the habit of putting your child down before picking up your hot drink. And push your black tea or coffee to the back of your worktop before getting the milk out of the fridge - lots of accidents happen this way.
- Hobs and hotplates can all stay hot even after they've been turned off, and oven doors can be very hot when the oven is on. You can teach children how to behave safely around them, but they might not understand or remember the danger. A safety gate can help you keep young children out of the kitchen while you're cooking. Or pop them in their highchair.
- Microwaves don't heat things in the same way as a cooker. Avoid warming babies' bottles in the microwave, the milk may heat up unevenly leaving spots of very hot milk which can scald your baby's mouth. Use a warmer or jug of hot water instead. Shake the bottle well after warming and test to make sure it's lukewarm not hot.
- Hot water bottles can cause serious burns if they are not used properly. When filling them always follow the safety instructions on the bottle, regularly check for signs of wear and tear and don't use hot water bottles that are more than two years old.

Button batteries. A hidden danger.



If a big, powerful lithium coin cell battery a thin button battery like a 5 pence piece gets stuck in a child's food pipe, it can cause catastrophic internal bleeding and even death. So it's important to keep any objects with easily accessible lithium coin cell batteries out of children's reach, as well as spare and even 'flat' batteries, and to act fast if you think your child may have swallowed one

CO SLEEPING

During the cold weather the temptation to sleep with your baby is greater, however, Tiny babies need a good safe place to fall asleep. The best way to keep babies safe when they're sleeping is in a cot of their own. Many parents take babies to bed with them, especially in the first few months when they seem to wake up every five minutes! Sadly, some babies have been accidentally suffocated by their parents. It is not common, but it is especially dangerous if the person sleeping with the baby has been drinking alcohol, takes drugs, is extremely tired or smokes, or if the baby was born before 37 weeks or weighed less than 2.5 kg at birth. A cot for your baby means you can sleep soundly too, knowing that they are safe.

However some parents choose to share a bed or other sleep surface (also known as co-sleeping) with their babies. In order to keep babies safe in a co-sleeping environment:

- Keep pillows, sheets, blankets away from your baby or any other items that could obstruct your baby's breathing or cause them to overheat.
- Avoid letting pets or other children in the bed
- Make sure baby won't fall out of bed or get trapped between the mattress and the wall
- **Do not co-sleep with your baby if** you or your partner has been drinking, is a smoker, has been taking drugs or is extremely tired; these factors can put babies at an extremely high risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) when co-sleeping. One study found that the risk of SIDS when co-sleeping is six times higher in smokers than in non-smokers.
- Never sleep on a sofa or armchair with your baby as this can increase the risk of SIDS by 50 times.

In addition to the risk of SIDS, there are other risks of accidental suffocation and asphyxiation associated with the places that babies sleep: Moses baskets, cots and slings for example. www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice