



StayHealthy

Health Information from the Visiting Nurse Service of New York

11 Safety Tips for Taking Good Care of Your Family

There are some important rules that can help you keep your family safe and healthy. Here are eleven child safety tips brought to you by VNSNY's Children and Family Services:

1. Childproof your home.

Use outlet covers, toilet locks, gates and safety latches for cabinets and remove household chemicals and medications from a child's reach.



Secure furniture so that it cannot be pulled over or climbed on (bookcases, TVs). Remove furniture made of glass or that has sharp edges. Avoid clutter, arrange furniture and stabilize throw rugs to prevent falls and injury.

Install window guards on all windows. **Keep the poison control number (800-222-1222) nearby.** If you need to use it: Know what and how much your child ingested, and be able to describe how he or she appears now (breathing, skin color and any other symptoms).

2. Protect against burns.



Test the water temperature with your elbow before bathing your child, keeping the water temperature below 100°F. Never place hot soups and drinks near children. Use gates and radiator covers to keep children away from heaters and hot air vents. If a burn injury occurs, apply ice and seek medical attention immediately.

3. Be prepared for the weather.

Dress your child in layers of clothing that can be added or removed depending on the temperature. On cold days, children should wear a hat. On hot days, avoid places with poor air circulation—like cars and homes without A/C. Never leave the children alone in a car. Avoid direct sunlight for long periods of time; shade is best. Beginning at six months of age, sunscreen can be applied to a child's skin. Remember to check your child frequently on warm days to make sure he/she is cool and hydrated.



4. NEVER call medication "candy."



Always keep medication bottles closed and out of reach. Follow the prescription instructions and do not change the dose or duration for which medication is given. Medication is only for the child for whom it is prescribed—do not share medications.

5. Be prepared during medical appointments.

Parents should attend all medical appointments and take notes so that details can be recalled later. If you have concerns or do not understand what is being asked of you, be sure to ask for clarification. Always bring the current list of medications that your child is taking. Keep MD and emergency numbers handy.

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1-888-VNS-1-CALL (1-888-867-1225) or visit our website: www.vnsny.org

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6. Practice toy safety.

Toys are fun, but they can also be dangerous, so always supervise your child when he or she is playing. Be sure toys are appropriate for your child's age and look out for toys with small pieces, which can be choking hazards. Avoid toys that don't have volume control or that may have lead in them (toys over 5 years old & from other countries) as they can be harmful to your child.



7. Develop a plan in case of a fire.

Fires happen quickly so practicing a plan is vital. Children often hide when scared, and therefore, may not be easy to find. Be sure smoke detectors are in or near all bedrooms and common rooms. Change batteries at least two times per year. Carbon monoxide monitors should also be present and checked regularly.



8. Practice crib safety.



Remember to put babies to sleep on their backs to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Avoid older model cribs which don't meet newer safety guidelines and do not use drop-side cribs.

A crib's slats should be no more than 2 3/8 inches apart. Make sure your crib mattress is firm and fits snugly in crib and keep pillows, stuffed toys and heavy blankets out of cribs.

9. Practice food safety.

Wash hands and countertops prior to food preparation. Wash all fruits and vegetables. Cook meats well. Refrigerate at 36-40°F. Date/label items and discard after one week. Never leave food out at room temperature for more than two hours.



10. Practice bathtub and car safety.

Never leave your child alone in the tub. Gather all supplies you need beforehand. Always use a car seat that is right for your child's weight/height and secure it in the back seat of the car.

11. Take care of yourself so you can care for your children.

Adequate rest is very important. Assign an alternate caregiver when you are ill. Babysitters should be experienced, patient, and preferably, an adult you know and trust. As you plan your child's doctor appointment, plan one for yourself. If you have symptoms of chronic fatigue and/or are feeling depressed, consult your doctor for treatment and follow up promptly.

Children and Family Services is a division of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York dedicated to the care of children and their families. For more information about VNSNY's Children and Family Services, please call: 212-609-6233.



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