

TerranearPMC Safety Share

Week of March 28, 2016– Dangers in the Home!

There has been so many expressions that relate “home” with safety. “He finally made it home,” “Home is where the heart is.” Nevertheless, a comprehensive study by the Home Safety Council found that home injuries cause 21 million medical visits annually and almost 20,000 deaths, 2,000 of which are children. Falls, fires, poisonings, severe lacerations and even exposure to hazardous chemicals are far from rare occurrences. The fact is, hazards in the home are present and unless they are recognized and some type of preventative measure is practiced, people can and do get hurt....and sometimes quite seriously. So here are a few of the common hazards typically found in our homes as well as things we can do to prevent family members and guests, from getting hurt.

Whether it's slipping on a wet floor in the bathroom or falling down the stairs, injuries due to falls are one of the most common accidents in the home. Make sure all staircases have solid handrails, and adequate lighting. A common practice in many homes is storing items like laundry baskets and groceries on stairs. Unsuspecting persons can easily trip and sustain a serious injury. In bathrooms, it is important to secure rugs to avoid slipping and to clean up pooling of water on slick surfaces. Make sure showers and bathtubs have slip-resistant floors or mats. If you have older family members in your house, safety rails may be a good idea.

Everything from candles to an unattended iron could lead to an accidental fire in your home. Therefore, smoke alarms should be installed in all bedrooms while being checked (change batteries) regularly. Never leave candles unattended or near loose cloth like drapes or throw pillows. Make sure that all appliances are in good working order and that no wires are frayed. Don't overload electrical outlets. In fact it is a good practice to unplug small appliances like toasters when not in use.

Accidental deaths due to high levels of carbon monoxide (CO) in the home has become a concern. What makes CO so threatening is that it cannot be detected by smell, sight, or sound. This means your family can be sleeping in an environment where CO has accumulated to a deadly concentration and no one would notice. This why carbon monoxide detectors can be so important. They will alert you if carbon monoxide reaches dangerous levels in your home.

From a piece of food going down the wrong way to a child accidentally swallowing a small toy, choking is scary. The biggest household choking hazards come from small toys and hard foods that easily block airways. To keep your home choke-free, regularly inspect toys for loose parts and scour floors for small toys or other items that have rolled under furniture where children may easily find them. Be sure to keep small, hard foods like nuts or hard candies out of reach of children, and of course, take small bites and chew your food. No need to swallow an entire cow in one gulp!

It's not difficult to understand the danger of sharp objects. Unfortunately there are a number of necessary items with sharp edges that are used both inside and outside your home. Accidents with kitchen knives or graters can lead to a nasty cut that might even need stitches. The best way to steer clear of cutting yourself is to make sure all sharp objects are properly stored, and even locked up if there are children in the home. Rakes, saws, and lawn mowers all present a potential threat. Always clean up tools after use and lock them in a shed or garage where children can accidentally stumble across them. When these items are in use, be sure there are no distractions, like talking on the phone or texting! These tasks require your full attention.



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It seems that every house has some amount of chemicals. This includes paint. Even if it is not lead-based, it needs to be properly stored and kept out of reach of children. And that means never put paint in a container other than the one it came in as a child may mistake it for a drink. Keep all household cleaners in a cupboard with a safety lock to keep children from accidentally finding them. Lock up pesticides and items like turpentine in a cupboard in the garage or shed.

Cords on window dressings like blinds or curtains can present a strangling hazard to small children and infants. Never place a crib or bed under a window with dangling cords. To keep children from getting tangled up, either secure all cords out of reach or trim them to a length that is only accessible to the adults in the home. Better yet, trade out window treatments for designs without cords.

The old rumor that most household accidents happen in the bathroom persists because it's true! In addition to risk of slipping and falling, the bathroom is also home to chemicals in soaps, makeup, and perfumes. With so many potential dangers lurking in this one, small room, it's crucial to be careful. Put locks or safety latches on cupboards that contain medications and toiletries. If you have prescription medication it's wise to keep them in a completely separate place, safely locked where no one but the person who needs them is able to gain access. For slipping while getting in or out of the shower, grab bars and other supports may be helpful when you have elderly and very young persons in your household.

And while many of us rely on dishwashers to clean plates and utensils, they also pose some risks – especially to small children. Keep them safe from sharp points by pointing knives and forks downward in the utensil basket. Never fill the soap dispenser until you're ready to start a load and check your dishwasher for leftover residue after each cycle. Make sure your dishwasher is securely latched at all times and can't be opened by curious fingers, particularly at the end of a cycle when burns from steam are most likely to occur.

Stoves present a danger, and not just because they're hot. In addition to burning danger from hot surfaces, an improperly installed stove can easily tip over and crush toes, fingers, or worse. Try to use the back burners when possible. This makes it more difficult for children to accidentally touch a hot stovetop. Never rest tempting items like cookies or toys on the stovetop, even when it's not in use. Avoid tipping by making sure your stove is tightly secured and unlikely to topple over when opening the oven. You can also install anti-tip brackets to minimize the likelihood of a free-standing range falling over.

Keeping your family safe is a full-time job. Paying attention to common threats and taking precautions to avoid injury make that job a little easier. But no one can be on duty all the time. Get some help when it comes to protecting your loved ones with a monitored security system.

In addition to helping keep out bad guys, most modern systems also offer remote access so you can check up everyone as often as you want. And if you choose a monitored system, that means you'll have someone looking out for you and your family 24/7 – even when you aren't able to.

A successful man is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at him. David Brinkley

