

PEDIATECH NURSING

Resource

Injury Prevention

AIRWAY OBSTRUCTION INJURY

Children, especially those younger than 3 years, are particularly vulnerable to airway obstruction death and injury due to their small upper airways, their relative inexperience with chewing, and their natural tendency to put objects in their mouths. Additionally, an inability to lift his head or extricate himself from tight places puts him at greater risk.

- Sixty percent of infant suffocation occurs in the sleeping environment.
- Children can suffocate when they become trapped in household appliances, such as refrigerators, dryers and/or toy chests.
- Children are at risk from choking on small, round foods such as hot dogs, candies, nuts, grapes, carrots and popcorn.
- Nonfood choking hazards tend to be round or conforming objects such as coins, small balls and balloons. More than 110 children, most of them ages 5 and younger, have died from balloon-related suffocation since 1973.

Prevention Tips:

- Always supervise young children while they are eating and playing.
- Do not allow children younger than age 6 to eat small, round or hard foods, including hot dogs, nuts, popcorn and hard candy.
- Keep small items such as safety pins, jewelry and buttons out of children's reach.
- Ensure that children play with age-appropriate toys according to safety labels.
- Inspect old and new toys regularly for damage.
- Learn first aid and CPR.

FIRE SAFETY

- More than 70 percent of all fire-related deaths are from smoke inhalation.
- A working smoke alarm is not present in two-thirds of the residential fires in which a child is injured or killed.

Prevention Tips:

- Keep matches, gasoline, lighters and all other flammable materials locked away and out of children's reach.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of the home and in every sleeping area. Test them once a month and replace the batteries yearly.
- Plan and practice several fire escape routes from each room of the home and identify an outside meeting place.

HOME SAFETY

- Over 2,000 children ages 14 and younger die each year in the home from unintentional injuries.
- Leading causes for death in the home are fire and burn, suffocation, drowning, choking, falls, poisoning, and unintentional firearm injury.
- Each year more than 4.5 million children ages 14 and younger are treated in hospital emergency departments for injuries occurring in the home.

Prevention Tips:

- Adult supervision of children even at home is critical.
- Keep flammable and poisonous substances out of sight and out of reach of children.
- If you must store firearms in the home, keep ammunition and guns locked in separate areas of the home.

HOT CARS

- When the outside temperature is 93 degrees F, even with a window cracked, the temperature inside a car can reach 125 degrees in just 20 minutes and 140 degrees in 40 minutes.
- Extreme heat rapidly overwhelms the body's ability to regulate temperature. The body can go into shock and circulation to vital organs will begin to fail. Infants and small children are particularly vulnerable due to their body configuration.

Prevention Tips:

- Keep cars locked at all times – even in the garage or driveway.
- Teach children not to play in or around cars.
- Never leave a child in an unattended car – even with the windows down.
- Put car keys out of children's reach and sight.

POISONING PREVENTION

- Each year approximately 1 million children younger than 6 years of age are unintentionally poisoned.
- More than 90 percent of all poisons occur in the home.
- Most common poisons are medicine and household products, lead-based paint and carbon monoxide.
- Children ages 5 and younger are at greatest risk for non-fatal poisoning.

Prevention Tips:

- Store all household products and medications out of a child's sight and reach.
- Always read labels, follow directions and give medicine to children based on their weight and age.
- Test children for lead exposure and test homes built before 1978.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors in your home in every sleeping area, and on the ceiling at least 15 feet from fuel burning appliances.

STRANGULATION/CHOKING

- Strangulation occurs among children when consumer products become wrapped around their necks.
- Common items include clothing drawstrings, ribbons, or other decorations, necklaces, pacifier strings, and window blind and drapery cords.

Prevention Tips:

- Place infants on their backs on a firm, flat crib mattress in a crib that meets national safety standards. Remove pillows, comforters, toys and other soft products from the crib. Never hang anything on or above a crib with string or ribbon longer than seven inches.
- Always supervise young children while they are eating and playing. Keep small items such as safety pins, jewelry and buttons out of children's reach.

- Ensure that children play with age-appropriate toys according to safety labels. Inspect old and new toys regularly for damage. Consider purchasing a small parts tester to determine whether or not small toys and objects may present a choking hazard to young children.
- Remove hood and neck drawstrings from all children’s outerwear. To prevent strangulation, never allow children to wear necklaces, purses, scarves or clothing with drawstrings while on playgrounds.

UNINTENTIONAL FIREARMS INJURY

Unintentional shootings account for nearly 20 percent of all firearm-related fatalities among children ages 14 and younger, compared with 3 percent for the entire U.S. population. Approximately one-third of families with children (representing more than 22 million children in 11 million home) keep at least one gun in the home. These include misunderstanding a child’s ability to gain access to and fire a gun, distinguish between real and toy guns, make good judgments about handling a gun, and consistently following rules for gun safety.

- The unintentional firearm injury death rate among children ages 14 and younger in the United States is nine times higher than in 25 other industrialized countries combined.

When and where firearm deaths and injuries occur:

- Nearly all childhood unintentional shooting deaths occur in or around the home. Fifty percent occur in the home of the victim and nearly 40 percent occur in the home of a friend or relative.
- Unintentional shootings among children most often occur when children are unsupervised and out of school. These shootings tend to occur in the late afternoon (peaking between 4 pm and 5 pm), during the weekend, during the summer months (June to August) and the holiday season (November to December).
- Nearly two-thirds of parents with school-age children who keep a gun in the home believe that the firearm is safe from their children. However one study found that when a gun was in the home, 75 to 80 percent of the first and second graders knew where the gun was kept.
- Before age 8, few children can reliably distinguish between real and toy guns or fully understand the consequences of their actions.
- Children as young as 3 years are strong enough to pull the trigger of many of the handguns available in the United States.

Prevention Tips:

- Children should not have access to firearms. Parents should seriously weigh the risks of keeping a gun in the home.
- Two safety devices – gun locks and load indicators – could prevent more than 30 percent of all unintentional firearm deaths.
- Gun owners should always store firearms (including BB/pellet guns) unloaded and locked up, out of reach of children. Ammunition should be stored locked in a separate location, also out of reach of children. Quality safety devices such as gun locks, lock boxes or gun safes should be used for every gun kept in the home. Keep gun storage keys and lock combinations hidden in a separate location.
- Parents should talk to their children about the dangers of guns, teach children never to touch or play with guns, and teach them to tell an adult if they find a gun.
- Parents should check with neighbors, friends or relatives, or adults in any other homes where children may visit to ensure they follow safe storage practices if firearms are in their homes.

WATER SAFETY

- One thousand children ages 14 and younger drown each year – over half of them are ages 6 and younger.
- For every child who drowns, an additional four are hospitalized for near drowning and sixteen are treated in hospital emergency departments.
- More than half of infant drowning occurs in bathtubs.
- More than 85 percent of drowning among children ages 1 to 4 are pool-related.

Prevention Tips:

- Never leave a child unsupervised in or around water including bath tubs, swimming pools and spas.
- Always wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal floatation device when on a boat, near open bodies of water or when participating in water sports.
- Air-filled swimming aids “water wings” are not considered safety devices and are not substitutes for personal floatation devices.