

How To Keep The Home Safe

Your home should be a place where you can relax and feel safe, but if you fail to take some basic measures your house is an accident waiting to happen.

Falls

Falls are one of the most common accidents to occur in the home. For older people even a slip on a mat can cause serious injury. Falls from nursery furniture, balconies and down stairs are all responsible for countless visits to hospital.

Ensure rugs and mats are anti-slip or remove them altogether and wipe up spills immediately. Ensure balconies are secure and avoid guards with horizontal rungs.

Safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs are a good investment as are non-slip strips on steps.

Drowning

In Australia two young children drown every week, and about half of those are in backyard pools, according to NRMA insurance. However baths, paddling pools and even nappy buckets can be fatal. A small child can drown in even a couple of inches of water.

Pools by law must have a safety fence that is self-closing and self-latching and they should be regularly checked. It is recommended that you keep a resuscitation notice on the fence. Paddling pools must be emptied straight away and stored upright and children in baths must be supervised at all times.

Burns (from fire, contact burns and scalds)

As well as house fires, common causes of burns and scalds include hot tap water, kettles, irons, barbecues, heaters and hot drinks. Misuse of flammable liquids and aerosols is also responsible for many injuries.

Reduce the temperature of hot water in taps by use of a thermostat or apply a device on to taps that cuts off water when it exceeds 50 degrees C. Vigilance when using irons and barbecues is essential and storing kettle cords and hot drinks out of reach is good practice. Every home should be equipped with smoke alarms at strategic points throughout the house.

Poisoning

Everyday products such as dishwasher powder and toilet cleaner can prove fatal if ingested and medicines are responsible for most child poisonings.

All potentially dangerous chemicals should be stored in a high cupboard, ideally with a childproof latch or lock.

Driveway accidents

After the backyard pool, the driveway is the most hazardous area of a home for children under five, according to NRMA Insurance. One child is run over every week in the driveway of their home.

Where possible gates and fencing should be used to keep children away from driveways and always watch children closely around cars.

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