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PREVENTING ACCIDENTS: *Simple precautions*

Accidents are a leading cause of death, serious injury and acquired disability for children in the UK. Three children a week die as a result of accidents and over 2,000 are admitted to hospital. Many of these can be prevented – it’s just that, by their nature, they often come out of nowhere, when we’re least prepared for them.

There are lots of reasons for this. Sudden changes in a child’s development, for example, babies starting to crawl or pull themselves up, can take parents and carers by surprise. And there are risks that aren’t always obvious – most accidents to young children happen in the home, where we might think children are safest.

Being informed and up to date about the changing risks to children based on their age and stage of development is the biggest step parents and carers can take towards prevention.

Here is a selection of the Child Accident Prevention Trust’s hints and tips for staying one step ahead of growing children – share these messages with parents and the practitioners you work with.

Burns & scalds

Six toddlers are admitted to hospital every day because they’ve been badly burned.

Hot drinks are the main cause of scalds for under-fives. A hot drink can scald a baby 15 minutes after it’s been made.

- Put hot drinks down well out of reach – don’t rely on young children understanding not to touch.
- Put hot drinks down before picking

up a child and avoid passing hot drinks over children’s heads.

Button batteries can burn through a child’s throat if swallowed and lead to serious internal bleeding and death. As such, keep objects with accessible button batteries well out of reach of young children.

Falls

Falls down stairs, from highchairs or from windows – even on the ground floor – can damage babies’ and children’s brains as well as their bodies.

- Strap babies and toddlers into their highchair every time you use it.
- Keep a hand free to hold on when carrying babies or children up and down stairs.
- Take care not to put furniture in front of windows so there is nothing for children to climb onto.
- Don’t leave a baby alone on a raised surface, even for a minute.

Poisoning

Some 3–4 year olds can open child safety caps in seconds.

- **Painkillers** and everyday medicines are the most common way for young children to be poisoned so keep all medicines out of reach and sight in a high-up lockable cabinet.
- **Liquitabs** can be very attractive to babies and small children but can be harmful if swallowed so keep them out of reach and sight.
- **E-cigarette** refills are deadly to children and need to be kept well out of reach.

Choking & strangulation

Choking can be silent, with nothing to warn you that something is wrong. Babies can choke on liquids if left propped up with a bottle.

- Cut food up into small pieces for young children and encourage them to sit still when eating.
- Babies should not be propped up with a bottle or put to sleep with one.

Blind cord strangulation kills at least two children each year, so fit cleat hooks to tie blind cords and chains back.

Road safety

Children may use words like ‘fast’ and ‘slow’, ‘near’ and ‘far’, but this doesn’t necessarily mean they can judge speed or distance...

- Make sure children learn to hold your hand when out and about.
- Use the time when you are out walking to start to teach the Green Cross Code.
- Talk to children about how fast cars are going compared to other ones, and how near and far things are.
- Make sure children know how important it is to wear their cycle helmets on their bikes.

You can get regular support on accident prevention by signing up for CAPT News, a regular e-bulletin, at capt.org.uk. There, you’ll also find resources for parents and carers in the CAPT shop. Visit [facebook.com/ChildAccidentPreventionTrust](https://www.facebook.com/ChildAccidentPreventionTrust) and follow @CAPTcharity



NUMBER OF CHILD DEATHS CAUSED BY ACCIDENTS EACH WEEK.

SOURCE: CAPT