5 Tips to Stay Safe

Install carbon monoxide (CO) detectors and smoke detectors near sleeping areas and on each level of your home. Check the batteries routinely and replace them once a year.

Use brackets, braces, or wall straps to secure unstable or top-heavy furnishings to the wall.

Secure televisions on low, sturdy tables or storage units; push the television as far back as possible. Mount flat screen TVs securely to the wall.

If there is a fireplace, replace the grill with a screen and store logs, matches, and any other tools out of the reach of young children. Install corner and edge bumper guards around the sharp edges of a fireplace.

Move furniture away from windows, and away from stairwells.

Have the number of the Poison Control Center Help Hotline in several convenient locations around the house. The hotline number is 800-222-1222.

MU Extension contributors:

Creating a Child Safe Home

Accidents can occur quickly—take preventative steps

Some of the greatest threats to children’s safety actually occur at home. Childproofing our homes is one of the most important steps we can do take as caregivers to young children. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, unintentional injuries—including burns, drowning, falls, poisoning and road traffic—are the leading cause of death among children in the U.S.

According to Marsha Alexander, MU Extension housing and environmental design specialist, “Years ago when my oldest son was only two, I was hastily preparing to leave for an Extension presentation and not paying close attention to him. We were in the garage and I was focused on his car seat. When I heard him scream, I looked over and saw that he had found an open can of oil that resembled a pop can. He had gotten some in his eyes. I still remember my terror as I rushed my son to the nearest healthcare center where they promptly rinsed out his eyes. Thankfully he was fine but it could have been much worse. From that day forward, I was extra careful on everything regarding child safety in and around our home.”

Accidents can occur so quickly and without warning. It is critical to take preventative steps to make sure your home is kid-friendly.

First, take some time to evaluate each area of your home, both inside and out. From car seats to installation of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, there are many potential hazards that need to be addressed.

In the kitchen, install stove guard and knobs. This will prevent kids from igniting stove burners and hopefully prevent burns.

Attach safety latches and locks on kitchen and bathroom cabinets. Keep kids out of any cabinets that may contain medicines, household cleaners, and other potential hazards. Be sure to secure any drawers containing scissors, knives, and other sharp utensils.

Check your water heater. It is recommended to turn down the temperature to 120 degrees F. (medium setting on a gas heater dial). Even at that temperature, children can be burned so use caution when the hot water is running.

Throughout the house, shorten window-blind cords or use safety tassels and inner cord stops so that children cannot get entangled.

Place covers on unused electrical outlets. Install safety gates in front of any stairs in the home. Install corner and edge bumper guards on furniture such as tables and around fireplace edges.

Find a room-by-room checklist at:
http://extension.uga.edu/publications/files/pdf/C%20201049_1.PDF

Remember, the key to providing a child safe home environment is prevention.
What kids need from parents

Help your child succeed with 7 key experiences

According to Sarah Traub, MU Extension human development and family science specialist, “A vast amount of research points to 7 key experiences that ALL children need from their parent-child relationship in their early years to succeed in life.”

1. A healthy birth: (which includes a healthy womb environment).

2. A secure foundation: for years research has shown that babies need parents who respond to their cues and signals to help them feel safe and secure.

3. A rich language environment: Parents need to not only talk to their infants early on, but read to them as well. Babies whose parents talk to them have shown better outcomes in future learning.

4. Safe and stimulating opportunities to play and explore. You may have noticed your infant or young child is very curious and interested in exploring a new room or toy. Exploration helps a child learn new things and advance his/her development.

5. Clear and reasonable limits. All children need clear guidelines and boundaries set by their parents. They may not always like those boundaries, but having those in place help them feel secure and help children learn to set reasonable limits for themselves in the future.

6. Opportunities to make choices and handle responsibilities. The older children become the more you will want to let them have control over. Start with small choices such as choosing whether they want to eat broccoli or carrots for dinner. Be sure to only give 2 options to choose from with younger children (e.g., Do you want to wear the blue shirt or the yellow shirt today?).

7. Protection from violence and trauma. All children need to feel safe and protected.

Get a rainbow of fruits and vegetables

September is fruit and veggies – more matters month. According to Melissa Bess, MU extension nutrition and health education specialist, “Getting a rainbow of colorful fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables is important for optimal health.”

Different colors represent different health benefits. Orange and yellow fruits and veggies, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, or oranges, are important for healthy vision, a healthy heart, protection against illness, and lowers risk for some cancers.

Red fruits and veggies, like apples, tomatoes, and watermelon, help improve memory, keep our heart healthy, and lowers risk for some cancers.

White veggies, like onions and cauliflower, keep our heart healthy.

Green fruits and veggies, such as spinach, broccoli, or peppers, help keep our vision sharp, keep our bones and teeth strong, and lowers risk for some cancers.

Blue and purple fruits and veggies, like grapes and berries, help with memory, healthy aging, and lowers risk for some cancers.

Choosing a variety of fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables provides an assortment of antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Canned and frozen fruits and vegetables typically have a similar amount of healthy nutrients as fresh, but may have more sodium or sugar.

Canned and frozen fruits and vegetables can be a convenient or cheaper option when fresh is not in season or is more expensive.

Children can help choose which fruits and vegetables to buy at the store or market and help wash, peel, or cut them (depending on their age).

They are more likely to eat fruits and veggies if they are involved and if you make it fun for them.

Kids can easily make ants on a log (celery with peanut butter and raisins), personalized veggie pizzas, smoothies (with adult help with the blender), fruit or veggie kabobs, or homemade fruity popsicles.

Half of our plate at every meal should be filled with fruits and vegetables. Add more color and variety to your meals with tasty fruits and veggies and your children will too!