

# safety and your toddler



Did you know that in New Zealand around 13,000 children under five years of age are admitted to hospital each year with injuries?

Most injuries occur in and around the home and can be prevented by making simple changes to your environment. Remember, even with changes, you still need to make sure you supervise your toddler to prevent injuries from occurring.

Your toddler is at a very busy stage of their life. They rush around on unsteady feet with little understanding of any dangers. Age one is the most injury-prone stage of your child's life.

**read** Plunket's top tips and complete the checklist to keep your toddler safe.

## top tips to keep your toddler safe

### Preventing drowning

It only takes 5cm of water for a toddler to drown in. It can happen silently and very swiftly.

- **Never** leave your toddler alone near water – not even for a second.
- To keep your toddler safe, empty the bath and paddling pool as soon as they are finished with it.
- Keep within close reach of your toddler when they play around water.
- Make sure your toddler can't get to your neighbour's swimming pool or spa.

### Preventing falls

As your toddler gains confidence and explores, they will fall again and again, and can get into dangerous areas.

- Use barriers at the top and at the bottom of stairs. You can begin to teach your child how to climb up and down stairs but stay with them every time.
- Keeping low furniture away from windows, and using window catches, will stop your toddler from climbing out of upper-storey windows and falling.
- Always use the safety harness on your high chair and buggy.
- Cots should be placed away from windows and blind cords to avoid choking and strangulation hazards. Cot sides should also be kept up to discourage climbing toward windows.

### Preventing choking and suffocation

Your toddler is always learning, experimenting and becoming more independent. They can choke easily on food, toys or plastic wrapping.

- Cut up your toddler's food and make sure they sit while they eat.
- Small toys, parts of toys, coins – anything smaller than a ping pong ball – is a choking hazard.
- Plastic bags can be dangerous and need to be stored out of reach. If they could fit over your child's head, they are a suffocation risk.

Make sure you learn how to save your child's life if they choke. The **RED** section of your Well Child Tamariki Ora book has details of what to do if a child chokes.

### Preventing poisoning

Toddlers will still put things into their mouths as they explore and learn about what is safe. Keeping all poisons, including household cleaners and medications, out of reach and out of sight will reduce the risk of poisoning.

- Check the paint on older furniture, toys and houses. If the paint is lead-based, it can poison young children and babies.
- Check poisons have child-resistant tops – but remember these are not child-proof. Safe storage is essential.
- Never store poisonous liquids in soft-drink bottles.

More young children are poisoned by liquid Paracetamol than any other medicine. Follow the instructions to make sure you give the correct amount of the correct strength of Paracetamol to your child.

Keep the 24 hour National Poisons Centre phone number beside your phone, 0800 POISON or 0800 764 766.



## Car and road safety

Your toddler must travel in a car seat every time they go in the car.

- The safest place for all car seats is in the **back seat**.
- Make sure the car seat is suitable for their size and weight. Using a car seat that allows for rear-facing beyond the age of one year is the best option to keep them safe.

At this age, your toddler is at greatest risk of being run over in the driveway by a reversing vehicle. To help prevent injury, make sure you know where the children are at all times and talk with them about keeping safe around cars.

- They need to be secure, well away from the driveway, when a vehicle prepares to reverse out.
- A safe, enclosed outside play area, away from the driveway and road, will help keep them safe.
- Hold your toddler's hand when walking on the footpath together or crossing the road.

## Preventing burns

Your toddler is curious, and will grab at anything that catches their eye.

- By removing your tablecloth, you will reduce the risk of hot liquids being pulled over your toddler.
- Your hot water tap temperature should be around 50 degrees Celsius. If it feels too hot, talk to a plumber about how you can turn the temperature down.
- Fill your bath with cold water first, and then add hot water to bring it up to a safe temperature.
- Fires and heaters will need to be protected with a safety guard. Make sure the guard is attached to the wall so your child can't get around it or pull it over.
- When cooking, use the back elements of the stove first and keep all handles turned away from the front of the stove.
- Candles need to be on a stable surface away from curious fingers, and keep your matches and lighters out of sight and reach.
- Every household needs working smoke alarms and an escape plan in case of fire.

Plunketline 24/7 0800 933 922



# checklist

You can use this checklist to make sure your toddler is kept safe.

- I always use the 5-point harness in the high chair and buggy.  
*5-point harness can be purchased from some nursery stores.*
- I have stair guards at the top and bottom of stairs.  
*Stair guards can be purchased from some hardware and nursery stores.*
- The cot sides are kept up at all times and the cot is away from windows and blind cords.  
*Blind cord winders can be purchased from some hardware and nursery stores.*
- I always fill the bath with cold water first and then add hot water to get a safe temperature.
- The table cloth is put away so my toddler can't pull it off.
- The electric jug is kept well away from the edge of the bench and the cord doesn't hang over the edge.
- There is a fire guard around the fire and heaters in our home.  
*Fire guards can be purchased from hardware stores.*
- Clothes are snug-fitting to reduce the risk of them catching fire.
- There are working smoke alarms in our home and we have an escape plan in case of fire.  
*Smoke alarms can be purchased from supermarkets and hardware stores.*
- Toddlers are kept within grabbing distance of an adult when in and around water.
- The bath and paddling pools are emptied as soon as they are finished with.
- The swimming and spa pools are fenced correctly, and there is a self-latching gate in good working order.  
*If you are unsure, the local council can provide information about fencing requirements.*
- I have the right type of car seat for my toddler and it is fitted correctly.  
*If you are unsure about the car seat installation and use, the Safe2Go technician at your local Plunket Car Seat Rental Scheme can help.*
- Poisons, medicines, cleaning and dishwasher products are locked away up high, out of sight and out of reach.  
*Cupboard locks can be purchased from hardware and some nursery stores.*
- Emergency phone numbers including the National Poisons Centre phone number, 0800 POISON, 0800 764 766, are kept beside the phone.