



PROTECTING CHILDREN WHILE 'SHELTERING IN PLACE'

Social distancing and quarantines mean that we are all spending more time at home – including our kids. Parents are homeschooling, trying to work remotely and keep their children entertained. This can lead to unexpected hazards – we highlight a few common ones and share tips to remedy them.

SHARED TOYBOXES



For parents with multiple children, it is likely that there are toys in the home suitable for older children but hazardous to their younger siblings. One of the most common hazards posed by toys is small parts that younger children can choke on. Young children put many things in their mouth, making small toys and parts of toys a particular choking hazard. Parents and caregivers should check that children under three do not have access to these smaller toys and parts of toys. One simple way to check is to use a toilet paper tube (assuming you found some at the store). If a toy or part of a toy can fit into a standard size toilet paper roll, it's too small for children under age 3. Separate out those smaller toys and keep them on a higher shelf and away from younger children. Enlist older children to keep them away from babies and toddlers.

CLEANING SUPPLIES



We have all been pulling out the disinfecting solution and hand sanitizers with much more frequency recently. These and many other cleaning products can be poisonous if ingested, so never leave them on a counter or the floor and put them back in locked cabinets or up out of reach after each use.



SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

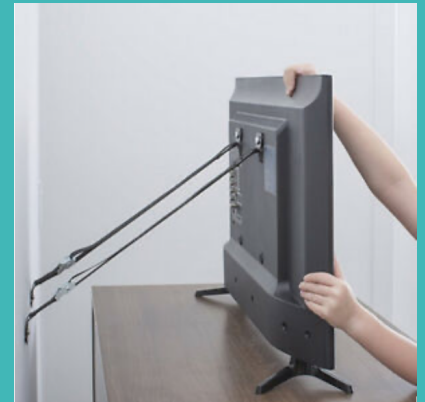
Sleeping arrangements can become fluid in a long break from routine and children might be staying with grandparents or other family members to help with childcare. Even in this unusual time, follow the [ABC's of safe sleep](#) – babies should sleep alone, on their back, and in a crib, play yard, or bassinet that meets the federal standard. This means no inclined sleepers, crib bumpers, or other bedding.



FURNITURE AND TVs



Furniture and TVs can pose a tip-over hazard, so anchor them to the wall. Check the [CPSC website](#) to see if any of your furniture has been recalled for a tip-over hazard. Learn more this hazard at stoptipovers.org and learn how to anchor furniture at AnchorIt.gov.



INGESTION HAZARDS



Some ingestion hazards might not be as obvious as others. Call the poison center immediately at (800) 222-1222 if you suspect a child has swallowed any of these:

Powerful small magnets:

These come with some building sets intended as desk toys for adults and can cause severe injuries if swallowed or inhaled. Better not to have them at all in homes with children, as even older children are tempted to fake piercings or use their teeth to pull them apart, not expecting them to repel the other magnet and possibly be swallowed. If they are in your home, check to see all magnets stay with the set and keep up and out of reach of children.

Button cell batteries:

Ubiquitous in our homes in remote controls, appliances, toys and even greeting cards, these coin shaped batteries can cause severe damage within a few hours if swallowed – burning a children's esophagus. Check to see that all battery compartments are closed (those on toys should require a tool to access batteries) and inaccessible by children. You can use duct tape on remote controls to secure the compartment if needed.

Liquid nicotine:

While new federal law requires child resistant packaging, even a tiny bit of this nicotine product can injure and kill a toddler. If anyone vapes in the household, keep the products up and out of reach. Liquid nicotine can be absorbed through a child's skin even if they don't swallow any.

Laundry packets:

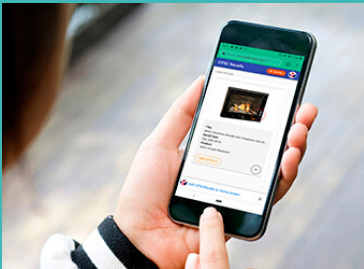
While convenient for laundry, these are very appealing to young children and can cause eye injuries and severe intestinal or respiratory problems if swallowed or mouthed. Use a liquid or powder detergent if very young children are in the house or keep locked up and out of reach. Always close the child resistant container.

WINDOW COVERINGS

All cribs and other sleep products should be at least three feet away from windows and baby monitor cords. Window covering cords are a strangulation and entrapment hazard to children and babies. To keep children safe, install cordless coverings. If there is no option to replace window coverings, secure cords out of sight.



RECALLED PRODUCTS



Take inventory of the products you have in your home that your children use and search on the [CPSC website](#) to see if there are any active recalls on products you own. Check furniture products, too. For durable infant and toddler products, check that they are registered online. For help, use KID and CFA's [Manufacturer Directory](#) to find links to registration pages for common brands.

Remember that ensuring a safe home for your child is an ongoing task. Make sure that you routinely assess your home for new hazards so that children remain safe.

We hope you and your loved ones are staying safe and healthy during this tough time. If you have any questions or want to share how you and your children are dealing with social distancing, send us an email or tag us on social media.

Consumer Federation of America

cfa@consumerfed.org | twitter: @consumerfed

Kids In Danger

email@kidsindanger.org | twitter: @kidsindanger

U.S. PIRG

gbrombach@pirg.org | twitter: @uspirg