



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Within each educational session, a number of queries will be the same in relation to hazards within the home environment. Following are a list of potential questions and responses for further information in relation to home child injury prevention.

### Hazards:

- Falls
- Water (Drowning)
- Poisoning
- Burns & Scalds - Hot Outdoor Surfaces
- Choking
- Suffocation
- Electrical
- Nursery Equipment

### Falls

#### **Q. What is the most common cause for falls within the home?**

A. The top five most common causes for falls within the home include;

Steps and stairs

Rolling off change table - never leave a child alone even for a second

Falling from Pram, strollers & highchair - if unrestrained/five point harness not in use.

Baby Walkers - Not recommended by Kidsafe

Placing a child onto any raised surface eg. Bed, Couch, Table, Bench

Flooring/Rugs

### Water (Drowning)

#### **Q. Are swimming pools still a major source of child drowning and what should we do as parents?**

A. According to Royal Life Saving Society of WA, drowning is the leading cause of preventable death in children under five years of age. In the home, the most common location is the swimming pool, followed by the bath and nappy buckets. In 4 of 7 home swimming pool drowning locations, barrier deficiencies were identified.

The four key prevention messages to remember are:

1. Provide barriers to water locations, and maintain them
2. Supervise your children - when in and around water
3. Familiarise your child with water
4. Learn resuscitation

#### **Q. Is it really important to learn resuscitation and where are courses available?**

A. In each area, learning resuscitation skills is vital as the first few minutes in an emergency can make the difference between life and death. In regional areas, help may be miles away - it could be up to you. CPR posters and training are available from your local:

- Royal Life Saving Society
- Surf Life Saving Association
- St John Ambulance
- Red Cross

### Poisoning

**Q. What is the most common cause of poisoning in the home?**

A. The most common cause of childhood poisoning usually involves common medicines and household products. These medicines or products have most often been stored incorrectly, or are 'in use' at the time. An example of this includes a household cleaning product stored in a used Coca-Cola bottle, a contraceptive pill packet left on the bedside table or bathroom sink. Reinforce that child resistant is **NOT** child proof; many young children can open containers with these lids it is safer to store medicines and other potentially poisonous products in a locked cupboard up high.

**Q. What is the most effective way to prevent childhood poisoning?**

A. The best way to prevent childhood poisoning is to store all poisons in a locked cupboard - preferably at least 1.5 metres above the ground. Medicines must also be stored in a locked storage container separate from chemicals and cleaning products. It is important to place child resistant locks on cupboard or cabinets that store medicines and chemical products. These types of storage containers or equipment can be purchased from hardware stores or contact Kidsafe WA.

### Burns & Scalds

**Q. What are the most common sources and locations of burns and scalds?**

A. The most common reason for burn or scald hospitalisation is hot food/drinks, followed by hot water tap with 9 out of 10 hot tap water scalds happening in the bathroom.

Hot Food and Drink Scalds most commonly occur when a child is being held while:

- the adult is consuming a hot cup of tea/coffee,
- putting the hot drinks too close to the edge of the table - within a child's reach,
- children under parents feet while preparing meals, or
- children pulling pots down from stoves, or tablecloths off tables.

Tap (shower) water scalds require an average of 37 days hospitalisation, bath water an average of 18 days hospitalisation. The best way to **prevent** hot water tap burns and scalds is to control the temperature of your bathroom hot water tap by having a plumber control the delivery temperature of your hot water to a maximum of 50°C (At 50°C it takes 5min to cause a full thickness burn where at 60°C it occurs in less than a second). Do not turn down the temperature on your hot water storage unit yourself - storage units must remain above 60°C to kill bacteria that grows in the warm water, ensure all changes are made by a licensed plumber or install child resistant tap covers.

**Q. What is the difference between burns and scalds?**

A. Burns are the result of contact with flames and hot objects. Burn hospitalisations are due to children coming into contact with flame and heat sources such as BBQ's, home heaters and fires, and irons. Scalds are a burn that is caused by hot liquid, hot vapour or steam. Scalds are commonly associated with hot drinks; water being boiled for drinks; cooking and hot food, and hot water tap.

**Q: Can children be burnt by water coming out of the hose?**

A: Small amounts of water heat very quickly. Where the temperature is high, water in taps, pipes and hoses will heat quickly, sometimes to a temperature that can scald the unwary. Always let the tap or hose run for a bit before putting your hands or face in the water. Try storing the hose in the coolest place in the garden, not left lying across the yard for the sun to heat it up.

**Q: Sometimes the cold water comes out of the tap hot enough to burn. How do I stop my children being burnt when they think the water is cold?**

A: For younger children, use tap covers to stop them turning on either hot or cold water taps. For older children, teach them to let the water run a bit before either adding any hot water or putting their hands or other body parts under the water.

The water run out can be collected in a bucket or other suitable container for use later on the garden to help to reduce water wastage, however ensure this is not left sitting around to create a drowning hazard.

**Q: The ground gets very hot where we live – children burn their feet – how can we stop this?**

A: In areas where it is very hot, children should wear shoes or sandals to protect their feet from burns. Going barefoot should be left for indoors only. Burns on the soles of the feet are very painful

**Q: Our play equipment gets very hot – so hot that the children can't use it in the middle of the day.**

A: If you live where the temperatures are extreme, try to ensure that play equipment is positioned where it will get the most shade throughout the day and so that exposed surfaces face a southerly direction to reduce their direct exposure to the full force of the sun.

### Choking

**Q. What is the most common cause of choking in the home?**

A. Children less than five years old have the highest death rate due to choking on food. Nearly all children who choke on non-food items are also under the age of five years. Young children place just about all objects in their mouth as a means of exploring the world around them. The best way to **prevent** choking is the prepare food through grating, mashing, removing the skin or chopping up into very small pieces. **Always** supervise children whilst eating or playing; ensure that toys are age appropriate for your child.

**Q. What to do if a Child is choking?**

- Check first to see if the child is able to cough, cry and breathe.
- If the child is breathing, they may be able to dislodge the food by coughing. Do not hit the child on the back because this can dislodge food to a more dangerous position. Stay with the child. If the child's breathing has not improved within a few minutes, telephone 000 for an ambulance.
- If the child is not breathing, place the child face down over your lap so that the child's head is lower than the child's chest and give four sharp blows on the back between the shoulder blades. This should dislodge the food. If the child is still not breathing, call 000 for an ambulance service operator. The ambulance service operator will tell you what to do next.

**Q: I've been told that it isn't safe to prop a bottle with a pillow so my baby. Why is this?**

A: There are 2 main reasons. One is that if baby chokes on the milk while unsupervised, it is potentially fatal. The other is that the pillow itself may fall over baby's head or face, causing suffocation and asphyxiation.

### Suffocation

**Q. How do children suffocate within the home environment?**

A. There are a number of ways a child can suffocate within the home, these involve interaction with plastics, inappropriate sleeping arrangements or additional bedding within the sleeping space, clothing and play equipment. With bedding, choosing a firm mattress is important to prevent accidental suffocation or SIDS, putting a baby to sleep on its back or side is most important. Pillows and bumpers are unnecessary for children under the age of two; the head of the mattress can be raised by placing a towel or pillow under the mattress. The best way to **prevent** suffocation is to supervise children whilst playing and to place the child in the correct sleeping position.

### Electrical

**Q. Is electrical safety a serious home injury risk and how do most injuries occur?**

A. Electricity makes our lives easier, but it is also dangerous. In the past five years, around 30 children have died from electrocution. Most of these children were aged under five. About 80% of children rushed to hospital with electrical injuries are injured at home. A simple prevention measure is to install an Electrical Safety Switch. In addition place outlet plugs in all empty power outlets, and ensure areas in the home where there are a large number of cords connected to power such as entertainment units, Televisions and Computers are blocked by a cupboard or sectioned off by a barrier to reduce the chance of the child playing with the cords.

### Nursery and the Equipment

**Q. How do I know the equipment I am purchasing is safe?**

A. Look for nursery equipment that carries an Australian Standards Sticker. Only some products have are required to meet mandatory safety requirements before going on sale. The following nursery equipment has an Australian Standard:

For further information get a copy of "Keeping Baby Safe - Guide to Nursery Furniture"

**Q. I have been given a cot from a friend, should I replace the mattress?**

A. Always ensure that the mattress in a cot fits snugly - only one finger spacing between the mattress and any side or end of the cot when the mattress is centrally placed. A mattress that has been used by other children may have some deterioration and so may need to be replaced.

**Q. Where is the best place to position the cot in the room?**

A. Cots and children's beds should be placed away from windows where curtain or blind cords may fall into the cot or bed.

**Q. My house gets very cold in winter, can I safely heat my child's room?**

A. If it is necessary to heat your child's bedroom, it is best to turn it on for a short time before the child goes to bed and for a short time again in the morning to take the chill off the room. Rooms that are heated throughout the night may dry out the atmosphere and leave your child more susceptible to respiratory illnesses. Ideally, heaters used in bedrooms should be stable, have tilt shut down features, be thermostatically controlled, have cool touch exteriors and be convection style heaters rather than radiant style heaters. Gas and Kerosene heaters should not be used in bedrooms. Ensure there is no chance of heaters coming in contact with bedding or other items which may be a fire risk.