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Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance and health care specialists at Bouchard Insurance.

# Children's Health: Baby Safety

Parents worry endlessly about protecting their children outside the home but often overlook the dangers lurking right under their own roof.

## Fire Safety

Smoke detectors should be installed on every level of the home, in every bedroom, in hallways and near the kitchen. Check them monthly to be sure they are working, and change the batteries annually. If the detectors are more than 10 years old, replace them. A household should have at least one fire extinguisher on each floor and a carbon monoxide detector next to the sleeping areas.

## Water Safety

Eliminate standing water or other liquids in buckets or containers. Children left unattended even for a minute or two can drown in as little as 2 inches of liquid. This seemingly unlikely scenario happens because young children are top-heavy. If they lose their balance while peering into a toilet or bucket, they can easily fall in head first and be unable to get out.

## Choking Safety

It is important to supervise all eating or drinking and to make sure the babies are upright when feeding them solid food. Do not insist that babies eat if they are crying or resisting. Mash or grind food so that it is soft enough to gum or chew. Young children are

likely to swallow without chewing, so do not give them food such as peanut butter, popcorn, pretzels, raw carrots, nuts, grapes, hard candies, uncooked peas or hot dogs until at least 3 years of age.

## Poisoning Safety

Children explore the world by putting things in their mouths. That is one reason why many are victims of accidental poisonings. Parents can prevent many of these mishaps by identifying and hiding toxic materials. Iron supplements, for example, are responsible for 30 percent of pediatric poisoning deaths from medications. Also, according to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, the most common calls received about children ages 5 and under involved cleaning products and toiletry items such as baby oil, mouthwash and cosmetics.

## Fall Safety

Many parents think window screens are enough to prevent a tumble, but they are not. Always open casement windows from the top or fit them with locks to prevent small children from opening them. Low windows should not open more than 4

inches. Also, consider installing window guards.

Many other falling dangers exist around your home. To prevent falls, follow these suggestions:

- Keep heavy or breakable objects out of reach.
- Place furniture away from hazards such as windows, window cords and hanging items.
- Secure unstable furniture.
- Secure the changing table pad.

Always prepare for the worst. Post contacts for poison control, paramedics, fire and police departments near your phone, and make sure to have first-aid supplies on hand.



## Did you know...?

The leading cause of death in children is unintentional suffocation, followed by drowning. Baby proof your home, and always watch your baby so that you can avoid this heartache.