

Be Safe

June is National Safety Month, making it a great time stop injuries, deaths, and accidents.

Children Safety

Falls are the leading cause of non-fatal injuries for all children aged 0 to 19. Every day in the United States, about 8,000 children are treated in emergency rooms for fall-related injuries. This adds up to almost 2.8 million children each year.

Thankfully, many falls can be prevented. Parents and caregivers can play a key role in protecting children by following these tips:

- Make play areas safe. Check to make sure playground equipment is properly designed and maintained, and that there is a safe, soft landing surface below.
- Make home safety improvements. Use home safety devices, such as guards on windows that are above ground level, stair gates, and guard rails. These devices can help keep a busy, active child from taking a dangerous tumble.
- Keep sports safe. Make sure your child wears protective gear when playing active sports, such as wrist guards, knee and elbow pads, and a helmet when in-line skating.



- Supervise. Keep an eye on young children at all times around fall hazards, such as stairs and playground equipment, whether you're at home or out to play.

Older Adult Safety

Each year, one in every three adults aged 65 and older falls. Among adults over age 65, falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths. They are also the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma. Falls can cause moderate to severe injuries, such as hip fractures and head traumas, and can raise the risk of early death. Fortunately, falls are a public health problem that can be prevented.

Older adults can remain independent and reduce their chances of falling by:

- Exercising regularly. It is important that the exercises focus on increasing leg strength and improving balance, and that the exercises get more challenging over time. Tai Chi programs are especially good.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medicines. Give them your prescription and over-the-counter drugs so they can identify medicines that may cause side effects or interactions, such as dizziness or drowsiness.
- Have your eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year;

(continued)

update your eyeglasses so you can see well. Consider getting a pair with single vision distance lenses for some activities, such as walking outside.

- Make your home safer by getting rid of tripping hazards, adding grab bars inside and outside your tub or shower and next to the toilet. Add stair railings and improving the lighting in your home.

To lower hip fracture risk, older adults can:

- Get adequate calcium and vitamin D—from food and from supplements.
- Do weight bearing exercises.
- Get screened and treated for osteoporosis.

Fire Safety

Fire safety is another important issue because deaths from fires and burns are the third leading cause of fatal home injury.

- On average in the United States in 2010, someone died in a fire every 169 minutes; someone was injured in a fire every 30 minutes.
- About 85 percent of all U.S. fire deaths in 2009 happened in homes.
- In 2010, fire departments responded to 384,000 U.S. home fires, which claimed the lives of 2,640 people (not including firefighters) and injured another 13,350, not including firefighters.

Although the number of deaths and injuries caused by residential fires has dropped slowly over the past several decades, many home fire-related deaths remain preventable and continue to pose a big public health problem.

Prevent fire in your home by following these tips:

- Never leave food unattended on a stove.
- Keep cooking areas free of flammable objects, such as potholders and towels.
- Don't wear clothes with long, loose-fitting sleeves when cooking.
- Never smoke in bed or leave burning cigarettes unattended.
- Do not empty smoldering ashes in a trash can; keep ashtrays away from upholstered furniture and curtains.
- Never place portable space heaters near flammable materials, such as, draperies.
- Keep all matches and lighters out of reach of children. Store them up high or even better, in a locked cabinet.
- Put smoke alarms on every floor of your house, including the basement, and especially near bedrooms.
- Use long-life smoke alarms with lithium-powered batteries and hush buttons, which allow you to stop false alarms quickly. If you use regular smoke alarms, replace the batteries every year.



- Test all smoke alarms every month to make sure they work properly.
- Create a family fire escape plan and practice it every six months. In the plan, describe at least two different ways each family member can escape every room, and designate a safe place in front of your house for you all to meet after escaping a fire.
- If possible, install or retrofit fire sprinklers into home.
- If you have young children, the [U.S. Fire Administration](#) has some great resources to make fire safety fun for kids.

Follow these tips to keep you and your loved ones safe.