



Catholic Healthcare West

## Ask the Expert

*Arizona Republic*

**Q: My husband and children are home more often now that it is summer. What can I do to help prevent accidents from occurring around the house?**

**A:** The home seems like a safe place, but there are hidden dangers that are often overlooked. According to the National Safety Council, the rate of unintentional injury and death has risen to new levels after years of decline. And every four minutes, someone is killed as a result of a preventable injury.

During the month of June, which is recognized as National Safety Month, the National Safety Council focuses on a variety of ways to educate the public in order to dramatically reduce the leading risks to our safety and health. In doing so, we will save hundreds of thousands of lives.

Below are just a few tips how you can keep your family safe at home:

**: Keep poisons out of reach.** The most prevalent cause of accidental death in your home is inadvertent poisoning. Poisons may be found in everyday household items, such as medications, cleaning supplies and cosmetics. It's important to keep harmful liquids in a safe place and out of your child's reach. Potential poisons should be kept in their original packaging, and should not be stored in food containers like cups or bottles. It's also important to keep food items and chemical products in separate areas to avoid accidental poisoning.

If you suspect your child has ingested a poisonous substance, call the Poison Help hotline immediately at 1.800.222.1222, or dial 911.

**: Falls are more common than you think.** According to the National Safety Council, falls ranked third among the leading causes of accidental death in the United States. Consider applying nonskid floor coatings and slip-resistant mats where falls are likely, such as in the bathroom or near the pool. Remind your family to take their time when it comes to stairs, ledges, or uneven surfaces. Slipping or falling down a flight of stairs may result in cuts or scratches, sprains, fractures, or a concussion.

**: Don't rush household chores.** When working around the home, it's important to know how to properly use a tool or utensil. If you're working with a knife or sharp tool and it falls, let it drop. Trying to catch it may result in lacerations to your hand or fingers. When using tools, make sure you are in a well-lit area. And be certain to unplug electrical items before working on them. If you do injure yourself, seek medical attention immediately.



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**: Fire is always a potential hazard.** Fires that occur in the home may be caused by overheated or overloaded electrical wires, unattended barbecues or unattended cooking in the kitchen. When cooking with your children, it's important to turn pot handles so they can't pull them down. Make sure to wear tight sleeves when cooking as loose-fitting garments pose a fire danger. Keep fire extinguishers in your kitchen and garage, and make certain you have smoke detectors installed in each room of your home. If these detectors are battery operated, make sure to replace the batteries regularly. Have a planned escape route for each area of the home and a designated meeting place outside at a safe distance. Make sure to practice your escape plan periodically. It will be easier to remember in case of an emergency.

More information is available by visiting the National Safety Council's website at [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org).



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