

SAFETY CENTRE

LOW COST ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILD INJURY PREVENTION

IN THE BATHROOM

1. **Place a juice bottle over the tap spindle** to prevent scalds if young ones turn on the tap. Cut an X in the flat side of a 2 litre plastic juice bottle that is just a bit bigger than the top of the tap. Push the juice bottle on to the tap. An adult will be able to pull the bottle off, but a toddler will have difficulty removing the bottle and turning on the tap.
2. **Turn the hot water temperature down.** The best way to prevent scalds in the bathroom is to reduce the temperature of the hot tap water at the basin, bath and shower to 50° C. Ask a plumber or your landlord for assistance.
3. **Create a child-resistant cupboard.** An elbow catch is a low cost way of making an ordinary cupboard safe for storage of medicines/detergents etc as only an adult finger can physically open an elbow latch. [Plans are available from the Safety Centre]

IN THE KITCHEN

1. **Use a curly cord to prevent serious scalds from kettles or jugs.** Alternatively hook the cord up over a cup hook. This will avoid long kettle cords dangling over the kitchen bench. If cords are at the back of the bench, or hooked up they are less likely to be reached by toddlers. When purchasing a new kettle choose a cordless model to avoid this problem.
2. **Fit a wooden half door to the kitchen doorway.** This will keep little children out of the kitchen, but still allows them to see you and you to see them. (For a free plan showing how to make an inexpensive half door, please contact the Safety Centre on 9345-5085)
3. **Reduce the number of chemicals in your home.** You may wish to consider safer alternatives for cleaning such as vinegar mixed with bicarbonate of soda. All chemicals should be kept in a cupboard with a child resistant lock fitted.
4. **Remove stove knobs.** Most knobs can be removed from stoves to avoid children turning on the gas or heat. Remember to keep the knobs out of reach, but handy for adult use.
5. **Only use the back burners or elements on the stove.** Always keep pot handles turned towards the back of the stove.
6. **Stockings or thick rubber bands** could be used to keep cupboard doors shut. Tie cupboard handles or knobs together but be aware this may result in minor finger jams. This is not suitable for cupboards used for storing poisons.

LIVING AREAS AND BEDROOMS

1. **Secure blind and curtain cords** by bundling the excess cord together with a rubber band. This should be out of reach at least 1600mm above the floor.
2. **Place heavy furniture in front of low glass windows.**
3. **Keep doors closed** or place a latch near the top of the door to prevent access to dangerous items in some rooms.
4. **To avoid finger jams in doors** by keeping access doors open with a hook and eye installed out of reach 1600 mm above the floor.
5. **Remove coffee tables with sharp corners.**

For further information call the Safety Centre on (03) 9345 5085 or go to:
www.rch.org.au/safetycentre

31-Aug-08