Konsumentverket • KO



Keeping Children Safe

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How children are harmed

Children explore their surroundings without being aware of risks. So as an adult, you need to keep an eye on them in order to prevent accidents. It's important to keep an eye on your baby and make your home as safe as possible.

Putting everything in their mouths

Young children explore things with their mouths, it's all part of their development. That's why it's important not to let children play with things that aren't toys, such as coins, car keys, remote controls, mobile phones, jewellery and leather accessories. Such things could contain hazardous substances, and small parts that could suffocate your baby might work loose. Nor should young children play with toys designed for children over three years of age, as these often have small parts. Even food could easily get stuck in young children's throats. So adapt the food so that it's appropriate for your baby's age, and never leave your baby alone while they eat.

Burns

It's fairly common for young children to get hot coffee, tea, oil or boiling water on them. This causes burns. Try not to hold your baby on your lap while you're having a hot drink.
Also remember to place a fireguard in front of your log burner to stop your baby getting burned. Infrared heaters and hot pipes can also cause burns. Burns can be serious, and your baby may need medical attention.

Fall injuries

For young children, falls from fairly low heights are by far the most common cause of injury. Children commonly fall off their parents' bed, or the sofa. The safest place to put your baby down for a nap is in their own cot, or on a blanket on the floor. Many young children are injured when they're dropped by a parent or a brother or sister. A baby's head is heavy in relation to their body weight, and so falls often result in head injuries. Many babies need medical attention because of falling. Your baby is at greater risk of injury as they start moving around more and learn how to climb.

If your baby is injured, you might need to talk to a nurse to find out what medical attention they need.
You can call 1177 at any time of the day or night. Call 112 if the accident is serious, an emergency.

Find out more about children, injuries and medical attention at **1177.se**.
Find out what to do if your baby is choking and unable to breathe. You'll find some useful instructions on 1177.se.

Poisoning

Poisoning is more common when children start moving around on their own. That's why you must always keep chemicals, medicines, dietary supplements, tobacco and other nicotine products out of the reach of children. Corrosive products such as drain cleaner, oven cleaner and vinegar are particularly dangerous. Other highly dangerous products such as lighter fluid and lamp oil may cause poisoning or chemical pneumonia.

Always keep products out of your baby's reach, and in their original packaging. Never pour such products into cups or drinks bottles as there is a high risk of getting the containers mixed up, which could result in serious injury. Childproof caps aren't entirely safe, they just mean it will take your baby longer to open the bottle.

If your baby has eaten or drunk something that you think might be dangerous, call 112 and ask for the Poisons Information Centre. They're open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

More information is available at **giftinformation.se**. Find out more about hazardous chemicals at **kemi.se**.



Staying safer at home

You can make your home safer without much effort. You'll find the information in this brochure useful.

The kitchen

There are lots of things in your kitchen that could be dangerous for your baby.
Make sure you keep knives and other sharp utensils out of your baby's reach by keeping such things in locked cupboards or drawers, for example.
Most modern cookers come with child safety features such as knob locks, anti-tip devices and oven door locks. You can add a hob guard so that your baby can't reach hot plates or pull down pots and pans on the hob.

Also bear in mind that very hot water from the tap could scald your baby.

Doors

It's common for children to trap their fingers in doors. If the door doesn't have a built-in safety edge, you can keep your baby safe by placing a folded towel over the door to prevent it from closing completely. You can also buy safety edges for your doors.

Balconies and windows

Balconies and windows can be dangerous as children begin to explore their surroundings and are capable of climbing on furniture to help them reach higher. Your baby shouldn't be able to climb the balustrade, and you should make sure there are no openings of more than ten centimetres between the bars. If the openings are bigger, your baby might be tempted to try to squeeze through and then fall, or they could get their head stuck in the gap and be left hanging. The balcony door must have safety fittings and a latch.

Windows must have locks or safety fittings to prevent children from opening them. Locks must prevent windows from opening by more than ten centimetres so that your baby can't fall out or get their head stuck in the gap and be left hanging. Hanging cords for blinds, roller blinds and awnings can pose a strangulation risk and must be secured so that your baby can't come to any harm.

Bear in mind that glass panels in railings, balcony doors and low windows, for instance, should be made of tempered or laminated glass to prevent cuts in case your baby runs into the window or falls against it.

There are often no safety devices in older residential buildings. In that case, you have to buy and install the missing safety equipment yourself.

Find out more at **boverket.se**. Search on child safety.



Furniture

Children could be seriously injured if heavy furniture were to fall on them. That's why it's important to secure bookshelves, dressers, TVs, wardrobes and other heavy furniture to the wall.

Also bear in mind the risk of children becoming trapped while they play. A child could suffocate in small spaces if they're unable to open them from the inside.

Chemicals

Computers, TVs, textiles, plastics, paints and building materials can release chemical substances. Having plenty of ventilation in the home reduces the amount of harmful substances in the air. It's also important to keep rooms free of dust, as many substances accumulate in dust. This is particularly important in rooms where children crawl and play on the floor.

Paints and building materials can release chemical substances initially, so it's advisable not to renovate your baby's room just before your baby arrives. And after renovating your baby's room, make sure you air the room properly before using it.

Remember always to store chemicals out of the reach of children, or under lock and key.

Find out more about hazardous chemicals at **kemi.se**.

Electricity, chargers and lamps

Electricity is dangerous and must be handled with care. You must have several smoke alarms in your home, and you should have a residual current device (RCD) to make it even safer. Never use damaged electrical products.

Sockets must be childproofed. Modern sockets come with built-in childproofing that makes it harder to come into contact with live parts. If you live in an older building where there's no childproofing, you may need to replace the old wall sockets with new, childproofed wall sockets. Take care not to use old plug adapters or extension leads without childproofing. Tie up long cables so your baby can't end up with the cable around their neck – they could be strangled.

Also make sure that lamp cables are kept out of reach. A young child crawling around and exploring the world might be tempted to pull on a dangling cable, but they could end up pulling a heavy lamp down on top of themselves. Lamps must always have the light source, the bulb, screwed in. The base is live and poses a risk.

Older fluorescent tubes, low-energy light bulbs and old thermometers contain mercury, which is toxic. Take extra care if the lamp is hot when it breaks, as the mercury will be in the form of a gas. Dispose of the broken bits properly: don't use a vacuum cleaner, as this could spread the mercury in the air and cause you to inhale it. Open a window, close all the doors and leave the room for 20–30 minutes. Then put the broken lamp in a glass jar with a lid. Wipe the floor and wash your hands. Drop the jar off at a recycling centre, placing it in a container for environmentally hazardous waste. New LED lamps don't contain mercury.

Never charge mobile phones or other devices in children's rooms. Never charge devices at night while everyone is asleep, as chargers can catch fire. Also, don't leave the charger in the socket when you've finished charging. Children biting or sucking on the cable could be electrocuted.

Find out more about children and electrical safety at **elsakerhetsverket.se**.

More advice can be found at **kemi.se** if you have to deal with a broken lamp or a thermometer that could contain mercury.



Safer play

Giving your baby toys is great fun. But take care with the things you buy yourself and the gifts your baby receives. Pull on parts and check that everything is securely in place.

Toys

All toys have to be CE-marked. It's important to make sure that toys are age-appropriate, especially when choosing toys for children under three years of age. Never let your young child play with toys labelled "Not suitable for children under three years". Young children explore things with their mouths, so you have to feel, tug on and pull on the toy to make sure no small parts could come off and choke your baby.



A test cylinder can help you work out which small items could get stuck in the throats of children under three. Ask your local children's health centre to show you how the cylinder works.



Old toys may contain substances that we now know are dangerous. That's why it's often safer for children to play with newer toys. Not all countries have the same safety requirements, so buying toys from EU companies is a good idea. Also bear in mind that home-made items for children might not meet safety requirements.

Toys with sounds and lights may contain button cell batteries. These are small, round, flat batteries that your baby could easily swallow.

This is very dangerous, because a circuit could be formed and cause serious damage to your baby's mucous membranes. So you must always check that the battery cover is intact and closed, and can't be opened without tools.

Always store all batteries safely, and recycle them when they're exhausted. Even old batteries are dangerous for children. If your baby swallows a button cell battery, call 112 and ask for the Poisons Information Centre.

Long strings on toys could get caught around your baby's neck. So take away any baby toys suspended over your baby's pram as soon as they can sit up on their own.

Also avoid:

- toys containing fragrances, as they could irritate the airways and mucous membranes
- toys that make loud noises, as they could damage your baby's hearing
- rattles with long handles that your baby could try to swallow
- strong magnets, as these could be very dangerous if your baby were to swallow them
- small balls that could get stuck in your baby's throat and cause them to choke.

Find out more about safe toys on the Swedish Consumer Agency's website: **konsumentverket.se**.

The Swedish Chemicals Agency also provides useful information on toys, **kemi.se**.





Safer travel

Travelling can be dangerous. You can travel more safely if you use approved child car seats in the car and wear helmets when cycling.

Children in cars

Your baby's head is big and heavy in relation to their body, and their neck is fragile. When a car crashes, the child's head is thrown violently forwards and back. Extra protection is needed in the car to enable the child's body to cope with such stress.

Also bear in mind that children find it hard to sit still for a long time. If you're travelling long distances, take breaks so that your baby can get up and move around.

Child car seat

Children have to sit in car seats that are appropriate for their size. The safest way for young children to travel is in a rear-facing seat. This is true until they're at least four years old. Remember never to place a rear-facing infant car seat or child car seat in a seat with an activated airbag. Your baby could be killed if the airbag were to deploy.

The safest way for older children to travel is in a booster seat or on a booster cushion.

All infant car seats, child car seat and booster seats must be approved (E-approval or i-Size approval). This means they've been tested and are compliant with safety requirements.

By all means consult a shop where staff are trained to help you test and install your baby car seat correctly. If you're buying a second-hand child car seat, make sure it hasn't been in an accident and that it's not too old. All materials age, and older models might not meet safety requirements in the same way as new ones.

Find out more about children in cars at **transportstyrelsen.se**.

Wearing a helmet and cycling with children

All children and young people under the age of 15 are required by law to wear a helmet when cycling. Choose a helmet with a green buckle for children up to seven years of age. This kind of helmet provides the same protection as other helmets, but the buckle is designed to release if the child gets caught in the helmet. Teach your baby always to remove their bike helmet when playing.

Never buy a helmet for your baby to grow into. To provide good protection, the helmet must fit securely and cover the whole head. Choose a thin hat to wear under the helmet, if necessary. All helmets have to be CE-marked.

Child bike seats are designed for children weighing between 9 and 22 kg. Your baby can start travelling in a bike seat when they're about nine months old and able to sit up properly. Children must wear a helmet when travelling in either a bike seat or a bike trailer.

Safer play outdoors

You're always on hand when your baby is little and you head out. Look around, and have a think about what situations could be dangerous when your baby starts exploring.

Water

Children can drown silently in as little as a few centimetres of water. That's why it's particularly important to keep your baby within reach when you're near water. Never leave your baby alone in the water, on the beach, at the baths or by the pool. Put your mobile phone away so you can keep an eye on your baby at all times.

Ponds, swimming pools, pools and hot tubs all pose a drowning risk. Pools are required by law to be surrounded by a fence that children are unable to climb over or crawl under, with a gate that children can't open. The pool must also have a childproof pool cover.

Also bear in mind what your local area looks like. Shallow ornamental ponds aren't subject to safety requirements, but they could still be dangerous for children.

Children must wear lifejackets when sailing on the sea or lakes and near waterways. The lifejacket must fit well and be appropriate for the weight of the child. Children must wear lifejackets with a flotation collar, which will turn the child the right way up. Bear in mind that water wings and other swimming aids don't provide the same protection as a lifejacket.

Playgrounds

Playgrounds must be constructed so that children can't get stuck or end up seriously injured. It's important to use shock-absorbing surfaces such as bark, sand or rubber matting. You can notify the property owner or the municipality if play equipment is broken or dangerous.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions if you set up swings or other activity toys at home that need to be securely anchored in place. If you don't, there's a risk of them falling over and injuring your child.

Never use old railway sleepers or telegraph poles when building a sandpit or similar as they may contain creosote, which is carcinogenic (causes cancer). Also avoid old car tyres, as they may contain PAH oils, which are also carcinogenic and may cause other problems as well. If you're building anything for children, such as a sandpit, it's a good idea to use untreated timber and protect the wood with oil instead of wood preservatives.

Protection from the sun and mosquitoes

Young children have to be protected from the sun. It's best for them to stay in the shade and wear clothes and a sun hat. Apply sunscreen specifically designed for children to any unprotected parts of their body.

Check mosquito repellents carefully to see whether they're safe for children to use. Use clothing and mosquito nets as the main protection against mosquitoes. If you need to apply mosquito repellent as well, follow the application instructions carefully. Buy only licensed products, and keep them out of the reach of children.





Products for children

There are lots of things you need when you have a baby: a pram, a changing mat, a cot, a bouncy chair and a highchair. It's important for you to buy products that are safe and appropriate for the age of your baby.

Dummies, dummy clips and baby bottles

Dummies and teats wear out. That's why you have to check your baby's dummy, or the teat on their bottle, every day by pulling on it. If you can see teeth marks on it, throw it away. This is applicable to both dummies and teats on bottles. Your baby is at risk of choking if the dummy or teat is broken. The size of the dummy or teat should also be changed as your baby grows.

If you use a dummy clip, the strap should be no more than 22 centimetres long. Your baby is at risk of being strangled if the strap is too long. Avoid decorated dummy clips. Small parts could come off, and your baby could choke if they put them in their mouth.

If you use plastic baby bottles, check that the bottle is labelled and approved for food storage and heating in a microwave. Throw away any scratched bottles or plastic packaging as this increases the risk of inappropriate substances leaching out into the food.

Find out more about plastic in contact with food at **livsmedelsverket.se**.

Bouncy chair

Your baby has to be strapped into their bouncy chair. Follow the manufacturer's instructions as regards maximum weight and whether your baby has to stop using the bouncy chair when they start sitting or standing up on their own.

Never place your bouncy chair on a table or in any other high places as your baby could fall. Nor should you place your baby's bouncy chair on soft surfaces such as a sofa or bed, as that could cause it to tip over. Also remember not to carry the bouncy chair with your baby in it, because the straps and mobile aren't suitable for that. Your baby might fall if the straps or mobile break.

Pram

Which pram you choose is dependent on how you're planning to use it. Think about where you live, whether you'll be carrying in the car or taking on the bus, and whether it will fit in the lift. Many people buy prams online nowadays, which makes it harder to check quality and functionality. It's a good idea to have tried out different prams before buying anything. The pram should feel stable and not tip over easily. A four-wheel pram is more stable than three-wheel prams. Test the brake and how folding or adjustable parts (such as the handle) lock. And if there are no reflectors on your pram, make sure you put some on.

Prams for children who are unable to sit up on their own must have a reclining position. Babies' backs aren't strong or developed enough to allow them to sit upright. Remember not to leave the straps of the liner on the seat of the pram as these could strangle your baby. Also check that the straps are fastened securely when you carry your baby in the liner.

When your baby can sit up on their own, it's time to remove the liner or switch to the seat. Use a harness and adjust it to fit your baby. Your baby could fall and be strangled unless the harness is fitted correctly.

Baby carrier and sling

You have to support your baby's neck if they can't hold their head up. Follow the instructions provided with the carrier or sling to make sure it's safe to use. Openings have to be designed to allow your baby to sit comfortably, but the holes shouldn't be big enough to allow your baby to slip out. Avoid the risk of suffocation by keeping an eye on your baby's face. You mustn't squash your baby while you're carrying them. If your baby's chin is pressed against their chest, this could block their airways and prevent them breathing. And your baby can't call for help if this happens.

Changing table

The safest place to change your baby is on a changing mat on the floor, but a changing table gives you a better working position. Always keep one hand on your baby to prevent them falling. Children develop quickly, and you might find your baby can suddenly move in ways that you're not prepared for. Choose a changing table with high edges and a large surface area.

Bath

Drowning is a common cause of death in young children. So never leave your baby alone in the bath. Bathing aids such as bath seats or bath supports do nothing to improve safety. The water in your baby's bath should be at a temperature of about 37 degrees. Water that's too hot could harm your baby.

Baby skin is sensitive. Don't use soap, shampoo, creams or wet wipes on young children unless you absolutely have to. Avoid antibacterial products and perfumed products as this will reduce the risk of allergy or hypersensitivity.

Highchair

Choose a highchair that's stable and that your baby can't climb out of. Your baby shouldn't be able to stand up in the chair. That's why some chairs have a narrow seat, while others have a harness to prevent your baby from falling out of the chair. Always keep an eye on your baby when they're in the chair. Your baby could easily brace against the edge of the table and cause the chair to tip backwards.

Stair gate

Use stair gates at the top and bottom of stairs. It's important to make sure that the gate is fitted securely and working properly. Also check regularly to make sure it locks. Nor should there be a gap under the gate that your baby could get through. And your baby shouldn't be able to climb on the gate.

Baby walker

Your baby can move more quickly and reach higher when they're using a baby walker, which increases the risk of accidents. If you still want to let your baby use a baby walker, it must never be used near stairs. A baby walker has to be stable and have what's known as a stair stopper. Never leave your baby unattended in a baby walker.

Crib

It's important for your baby to have a safe place to sleep, because you can't keep an eye on your baby while you're asleep.

There are many types of cots that you can use during your baby's early years. Whichever kind of cot you choose, it needs to be stable and the bedding must be of the right size. Make sure your baby's face is kept uncovered, and that they don't get too hot. You have to avoid excessively fluffy and soft bedding as your baby is at risk of not getting enough air if they can't keep their face clear of the bedding. Babies can't move their heads by themselves, or remove anything covering their noses and mouths.

It's important to make your baby's surroundings safe when they're a bit older. Make sure your baby can't reach anything from their cot, such as blind cords, cables or small items. Also remember not to keep medicines or any other dangerous items on the bedside table.

Cot

The cot often has a bed base that can be adjusted according to the age of your baby. When your baby is tiny, the edge should be at least 20 cm high. As soon as your baby can sit up, you should lower the base to at least 50 cm. The bars on the sides of the cot should be 4.5–6.5 centimetres apart. If you decide to use an all-round cot bumper, it's important to make sure it's attached securely and not soft and fluffy.



Foam rubber in mattresses may contain certain chemicals that have a strong odour when the material is new. Before using the mattress, air it until it no longer has a strong odour.

Baby bed or baby nest

If you decide to let your baby sleep in a baby bed or baby nest in their parents' bed, it's important to make sure that the material isn't too soft and fluffy, or that there's a risk of your baby ending up with a duvet over their face. There's a higher risk of sudden infant death syndrome if your baby can't breathe freely or gets too hot.

Co-sleeping cot or bedside crib

It's more common now to place a cot next to the parents' bed. If you decide to buy a co-sleeping cot, it's important to make sure that the cot can be secured to the parents' bed. The side facing the parents' bed has to be at least 12 centimetres high when it's down to prevent your baby from falling out of the cot or rolling over into their parents' bed.

Travel cot

If you use a travel cot for your baby, check carefully to make sure it's unfolded properly and locked in that position. Press the folding mechanism and the top edges to make sure the cot can't accidentally fold up and injure your baby.

Find out more about safe products for children on the Swedish Consumer Agency's website: **konsumentverket.se**.

If your baby has been injured by a toy, a child product or any other product, report the matter to the Swedish Consumer Agency. Your report may help us to remove dangerous products from the market or alert companies so that they can remedy faults. Report the matter to us at **anmalan.konsumentverket.se**.

Clothing

Check your baby's clothes to make sure they have no decorations or buttons that could come off and end up being swallowed by your baby. Having long cords on their clothes is dangerous, too. Choose outerwear with a removable hood if you can, because that's safer. A hood that's sewn permanently onto the coat could get caught while your baby is playing, and your baby is at risk of being strangled or hanged.

Chemicals are used when producing textiles for clothing. Some of these chemicals may remain in the garment when it's new. So you should wash new clothes and bedding before using them. Ideally, use unscented detergent and avoid fabric softener.



Keeping Children Safe is for parents, grandparents and carers who want to make their homes as safe as possible for young children. Keeping Children Safe is available free of charge from children's health centres and other locations. This brochure brings together information from a number of government agencies.

Boverket

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