Fire Safety Tips

Everything you need to know to keep your kids safe around fire.

Home fires can start and spread quickly, which is why we all need to be careful and educated when it comes to fire safety. Just a little bit of planning can make a big difference for your family.

Check Your Smoke Alarms

- Working smoke alarms reduce the chances of dying in a fire by nearly 50 percent. They are a critical first step for staying safe, but in order to be effective, they have to be working properly.
- For the best protection, install smoke alarms on every level of your home, outside every sleeping area and in each bedroom.
- Use Daylight Savings Time as a reminder to check your smoke alarms. Replace conventional batteries at least once a year, even if alarms are wired directly into your home's electrical system.
- Consider installing a smoke alarm that has a 10-year battery.
- Smoke alarms expire after 10 years. So if your alarm is more than 10 years old, you should install a new one.

Create and Practice a Fire Escape Plan

- Create and practice a home fire escape plan with two ways out of every room.
- As part of your plan, designate one person to get infants and small children out safely. Have a back-up plan for young children just in case the primary person is overcome by smoke.
- Smoke is toxic. Teach children to "get low and go" if there is smoke when they are leaving the home.
- Practice feeling the door, doorknob and cracks around the door with the back of your hand to see if they are too hot. Help your children practice this step.
- Choose a place to meet outside that is a safe distance away from your home.

Every day, at least one child dies from a home fire and every hour approximately 14 children are injured from fires or burns. Ninety percent of all fire-related deaths are due to home fires, which spread rapidly and can leave families as little as two minutes to escape once an alarm sounds.

For more information on fire safety contact:
The Pediatric Injury Prevention Program at
Penn State Health Children's Hospital
injuryprevention@pennstatehealth.psu.edu
pennstatehealth.org/pediatricinjuryprevention

For more information visit safekids.org. © 2015 Safe Kids Worldwide®

In an Emergency, Leave Home Immediately

- In the event of a fire, leave your home immediately. Once you're out of the house, stay out.
- Wait to call 911 until after you are out of the home.

If You Live in an Apartment, Pull the Alarm

- If there is a fire and you don't hear the building's fire alarm, pull the nearest fire alarm "pull station" on your way out.
- Know all of your building's fire escape exits and use the stairs to get out. Don't use the elevator.

If You're Stuck Inside, Cover the Areas Where Smoke Might Come In

- If you cannot safely escape your home or apartment, keep smoke out of the room by covering vents and cracks around the door, and call 911 or your fire department as quickly as possible.
- Then signal for help at the window with a light-colored cloth or a flashlight.

Keep Flammable Materials in Safe Areas

- Remember to keep space heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn, and always closely supervise children and pets when the heater is turned on.
- Make sure you turn space heaters off when you leave the room.
- If using gasoline-powered devices, store gasoline in a locked location where children cannot access it. Keep only small quantities in an approved container that has child safety features.

Don't Over Plug

- To prevent possible fires, avoid plugging several appliance cords into the same electrical socket.

Stay Focused Around the Kitchen

- Use common sense in the kitchen. Limit distractions when cooking and don't leave a hot oven or stovetop unattended.
- Keep anything that can catch fire, such as dish towels or wooden spoons, away from your stovetop.
- Have a fire extinguisher in the kitchen in case of emergency, and make sure you know how it works. You might be surprised that most people don't know how to use one.

Install Barriers Such as Safety Gates Around Fireplaces, Ovens and Furnaces

- Make sure your fireplace is protected by a sturdy screen. Remember that glass screens can take a long time to cool down.
- If you are using a fireplace or wood stove, make sure you burn only seasoned hardwood such as oak, ash or maple.
- If small children live in or visit your home, use a safety gate around your fireplace or wood stove.

Blow Out Candles and Store Matches Out of Reach

- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn, and always blow them out when you leave the room or before you go to sleep.
- Make a habit of placing matches, gasoline and lighters in a safe place, out of children's reach. Avoid novelty lighters or lighters that look like toys.
- Teach kids to never play with matches, lighters or fireworks. Depending on the age and maturity level of your child, it may be reasonable to use the items with the supervision of an adult. Just be sure that a fire extinguisher and a phone are close by in case of an emergency.

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