



CHCHD News

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How safe is your home? Take steps to prevent injuries during Home Safety Month

Chattanooga, TN – June is Home Safety Month and the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department encourages Hamilton County residents to take simple steps to prevent injuries from the five leading causes of accidental home injury – falls, poisonings, fires and burns, choking/suffocation and drowning.

More than 30,000 residents in Hamilton County end up in the emergency room every year because of an injury, and more than 200 die from injuries they sustained. In 2008, the cost of injury in Hamilton County exceeded \$114 million, according to data from the Tennessee Department of Health, and that figure does not include the cost of rehab, emergency transportation, or physician charges.

“Summer is almost here and people are more active. Home Safety Month is a great time for individuals and families to inspect their homes and make necessary changes to help prevent injuries, especially if they have a swimming pool,” said Carleena Angwin, injury prevention health educator at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department. “Simple and inexpensive changes in each area of the home can make a real difference in preventing injuries and keeping loved ones of all ages safe,” she added.

Prevent Falls

- Install grab bars in the shower and handrails on both sides of the stairs.
- Put bright lights over stairs and steps and keep stairs free of clutter.
- If babies or toddlers live in or visit your home, use baby gates at the top and bottom of the stairs.

Prevent Poisoning

- Keep household cleaners locked up and out of reach of children.
- Use medications carefully. Follow the directions and keep them out of reach of children.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors close to the ground in sleeping areas.
- Call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 if you need help or poison prevention info.

Prevent Fire and Burn Injuries

- Install working smoke alarms and hold regular fire drills with your family.
- Stay by the stove when cooking, especially when you are frying food.
- If you smoke, smoke outside. Use deep ashtrays and put water in them before you empty them.
- Lock up matches and lighters or store them where children cannot reach them.
- Only light candles when an adult is in the room. Blow the candle out if you leave the room or go to sleep. It is safer to use battery-operated candles.
- Keep your hot water at 120° F or just below the medium setting to help prevent scald burns.

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Prevent Choking and Suffocation

- Keep common choking dangers such as coins, hard round foods, and latex balloons out of reach of children.
- Don't place pillows, comforters, or toys inside a crib.
- Clip the loops in window cords and place them up high where children cannot get them.
- Read the labels on toys. Be sure your child is old enough to play with them.
- Advise children to sit down while they eat and to take small bites.

Prevent Drowning

- Pay attention and stay within an arm's length of children in and around water. This includes the bathtub, toilet, pools and spas – even buckets of water.
- Put a fence all the way around your pool or spa.
- Empty large buckets and wading pools after using them. Keep them upside down when you are not using them.
- Make sure your children always swim with a buddy. No child or adult should swim alone.

For more information on how to keep your family safe in and around the home, please visit www.homesafetycouncil.org or the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department's Injury Prevention page at <http://health.hamiltontn.org/CHS/RPP.aspx>.

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