

Making your home super safe for your little ones

Every year, a million children are rushed to A & E because of accidents that happen at home¹.

In fact, accidental injuries at home are the leading cause of death in children aged over one².

Home accidents and injuries can affect a child throughout their life. For example, a child who suffers severe burns from scalding water may be disfigured and is likely to need several skin grafts, which will be disruptive to their schooling and stressful for the whole family. A fall from a high chair (falls account for 44% of childhood home injuries) can lead to severe brain damage.

Fortunately, most home accidents and injuries are preventable. By taking simple actions you can avoid serious accidents and the stress and distress that come with them.

A young child can't assess the risks in their environment and can't be relied on to remember the words "don't touch". In fact, it is not until the age of 4 or 5 that a child will have some understanding of danger and start to pay attention to warnings. **So, it is up to us to make our homes and gardens safe places for our children.**

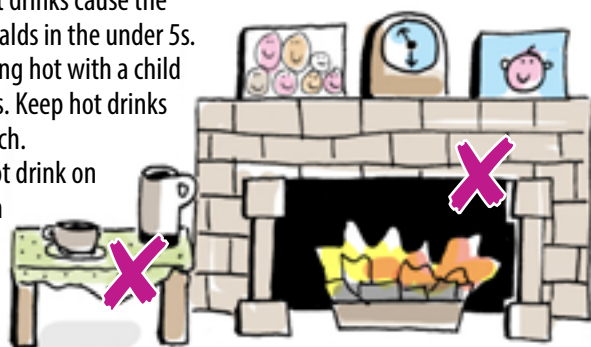
Please take the Redbridge LCSB House Tour to learn where the **dangers** are for choking, suffocating, burning, poisoning, falling and drowning in every room of a typical house. There is an exercise for you to do at the end where you can check what you are already doing well and what steps you need to take to make your home an even safer environment.

The lounge and dining room is the area where most accidents occur, so let's begin here

Accidents with hot drinks cause the most burns and scalds in the under 5s.

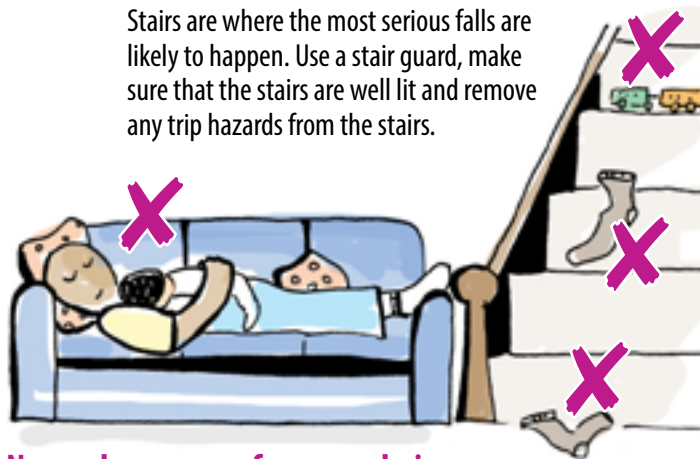
Don't drink anything hot with a child in your lap or arms. Keep hot drinks out of a child's reach.

Avoid putting a hot drink on a tablecloth which can easily be pulled over.



Use a fire guard.

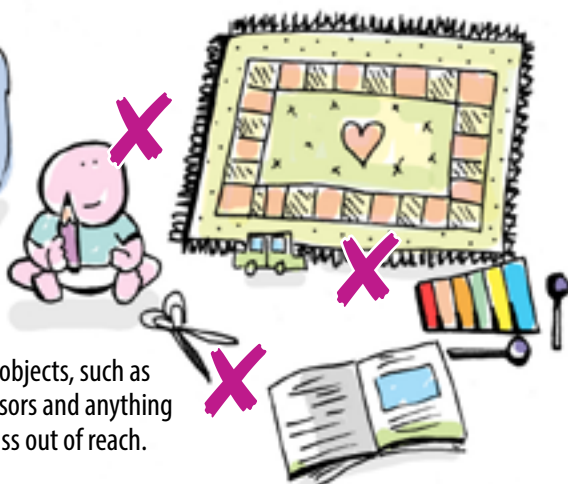
Stairs are where the most serious falls are likely to happen. Use a stair guard, make sure that the stairs are well lit and remove any trip hazards from the stairs.



Never sleep on a sofa or armchair with your baby either on your chest or next to you as this increases the likelihood of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).



Keep sharp objects, such as pencils, scissors and anything made of glass out of reach.



Keep the floor free of trip hazards.



E cigarette refills are **deadly** when swallowed. Keep them out of a child's reach.





Blind or curtain cords, as well as any kind of strap or string, **should be kept out of reach to avoid strangling accidents.** 1 or 2 children die each year after getting tangled up in blind cords.



Changing area: make sure that the baby can't wriggle off the changing mat and fall.



Keep pets out of a baby's room. A cat jumping onto a baby could suffocate them.

Pillows, blankets, bumpers and soft toys that end up over the child's face can block their ability to breathe. **To be safe, remove these from the bed and position the baby on its back to sleep.**

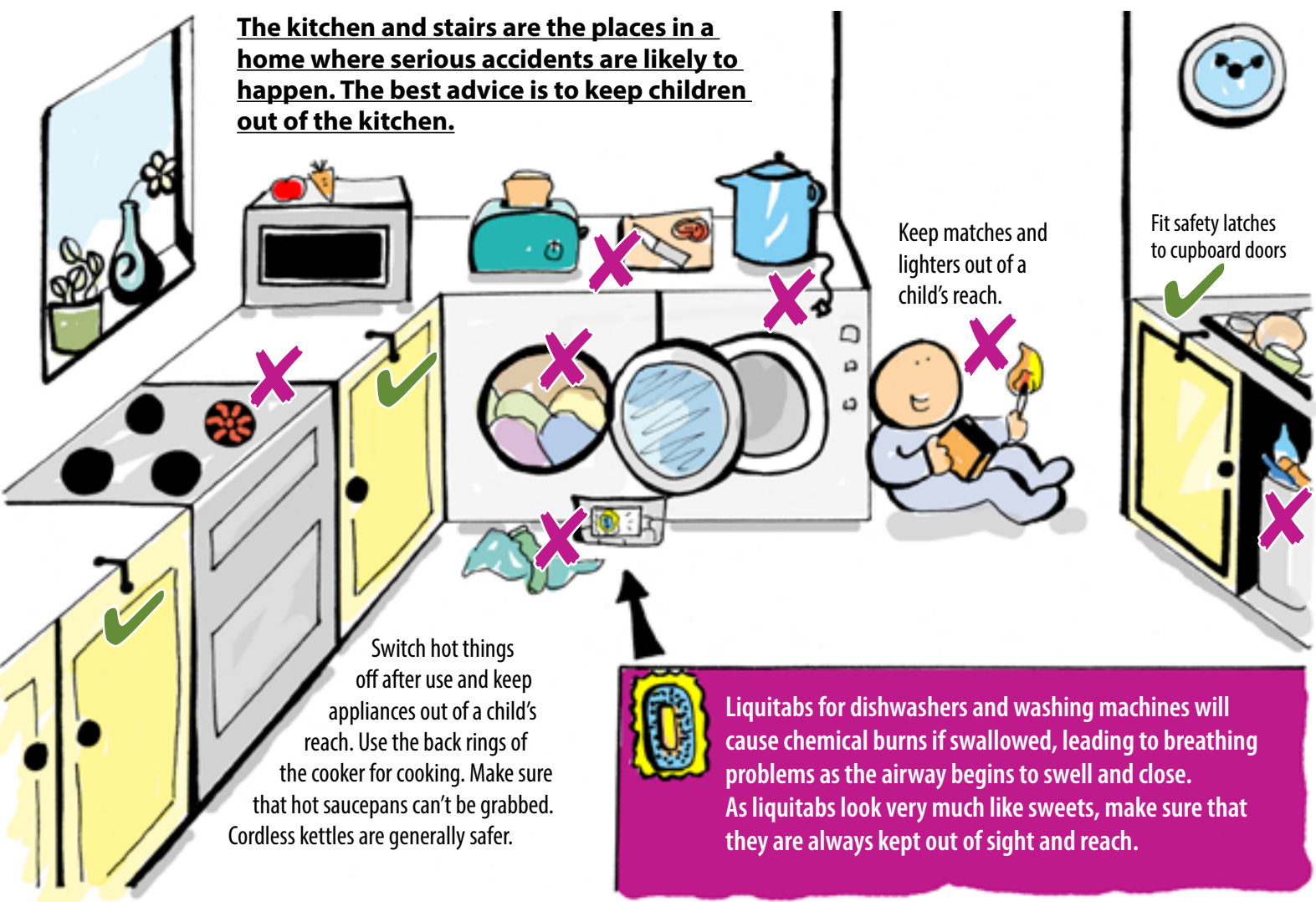
During the 2008-12 period, 37 children in England suffocated in bed.

For safer sleeping

- Always place your baby on their back to sleep.
- Don't cover your baby's face or head while sleeping or use any loose bedding.
- Keep the baby's room smoke free.
- Use a firm, flat, waterproof mattress.
- Keep your baby at a comfortable temperature. The risk of SIDS increases when babies get too hot. Babies do not need to wear hats indoors.

For more information on preventing SIDS through safer sleep for babies, contact the Lullaby Trust www.lullabytrust.org.uk

The kitchen and stairs are the places in a home where serious accidents are likely to happen. The best advice is to keep children out of the kitchen.



Keep matches and lighters out of a child's reach.

Fit safety latches to cupboard doors

Switch hot things off after use and keep appliances out of a child's reach. Use the back rings of the cooker for cooking. Make sure that hot saucepans can't be grabbed. Cordless kettles are generally safer.



Liquitabs for dishwashers and washing machines will cause chemical burns if swallowed, leading to breathing problems as the airway begins to swell and close. As liquitabs look very much like sweets, make sure that they are always kept out of sight and reach.



Keep balcony doors locked.



Use a restrictor so that windows can't open more than 10cm.

To prevent falls, keep chairs and anything that can be climbed on away from balconies and windows.

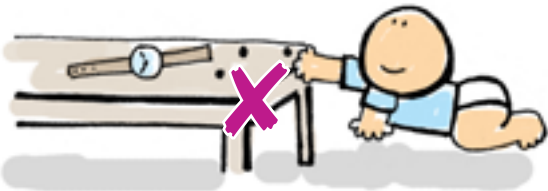


Secure cupboards and shelves to the wall if there is a risk that they can be pulled over.

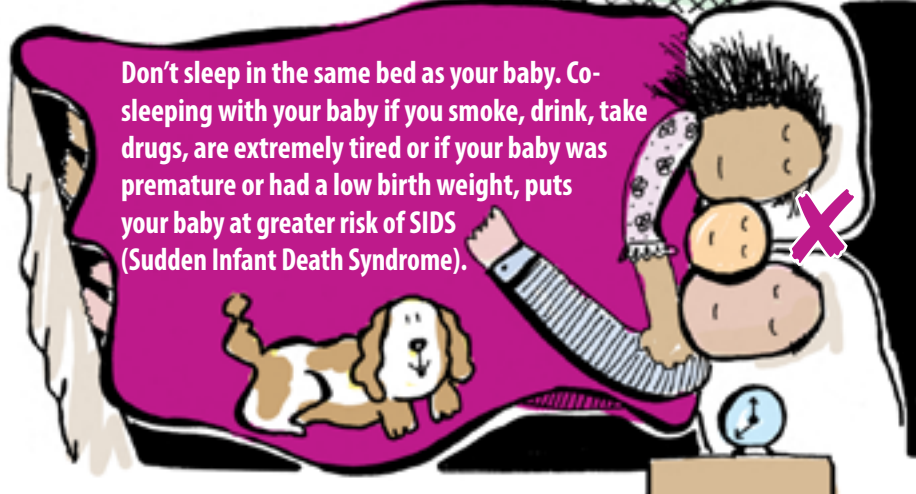
The safest place for a baby to sleep in the first six months is in a separate cot or Moses basket in the same room as you. ✓



Button batteries can kill within hours if swallowed. Apart from the risk of choking, if the battery gets stuck, it will trigger a discharge of electrical current, leading to burning, internal bleeding and death. Even a flat battery can generate a charge. Keep button batteries out of sight and reach.

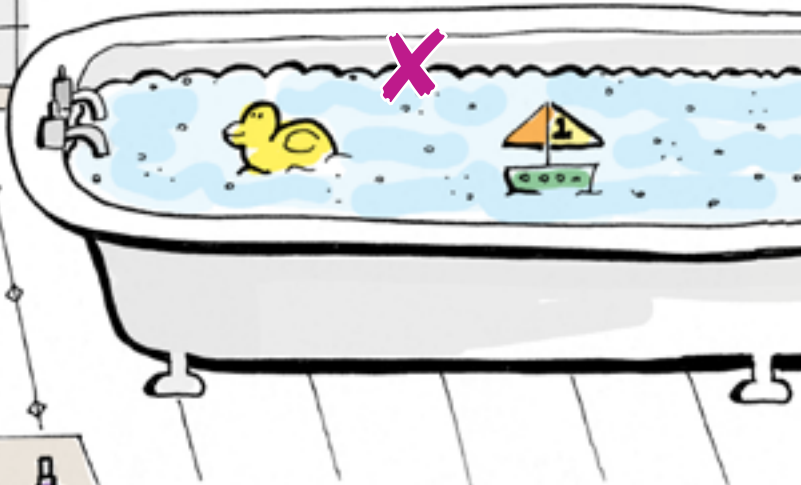


Don't sleep in the same bed as your baby. Co-sleeping with your baby if you smoke, drink, take drugs, are extremely tired or if your baby was premature or had a low birth weight, puts your baby at greater risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).



Burns from hot baths are the biggest cause of severe and fatal injuries in young children. Always test the temperature of the bathwater before putting your child in it.

Remember that drowning can happen in water just a couple of centimetres deep. Always supervise babies and toddlers in the bath.



All water in the home is a potential drowning hazard – this includes water in buckets, basins, baths and in the toilet.

Google Redbridge LCSB's leaflet ["Keeping your little one safe around water"](#) for further information.



28,000 children receive treatment each year for poisoning. 70% of poisoning admissions are linked to taking medicines, 20% to swallowing chemicals such as cleaning and gardening products. Always lock up pills, medicines, cosmetics and household cleaners.



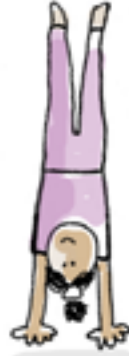
Make sure that your greenhouse is made from toughened and laminated safety glass. If not, fence it off securely.



Keep **dangerous chemicals** out of reach and in their original containers. If you put weed killer in an old soda bottle, a child may think that it is a drink.



Be aware of plants which are **poisonous** or have poisonous leaves or berries.



39% of all UK home drownings occur in garden ponds. The recommended advice is to fill in the pond completely. If this is not possible, make the area as inaccessible as possible and never allow your child to be unsupervised in the garden. Go to www.rospa.com for more practical information on making your pond safer.



Remove all water from paddling pools after use and **always supervise** children around water.

Young children are naturally inquisitive and fascinated by everything that they can see – which means that they will want to eat it, reach it, touch it and explore it. It is a good idea to regularly look at your house through a young child's eyes to make sure that it is safe. Do safety checks every few weeks and at each new stage of your child's development. The 'Staying Safe' section of FIND <http://find.redbridge.gov.uk> has links to useful articles and information on home safety. You may also want a health visitor to help you the first time.

Remember that simple changes can prevent home accidents and save lives. Take a few minutes to fill out the checklist below. What are you already doing well with your home safety? What things do you need to do differently?

Home safety checklist

Things that I am already doing well:

Things I need to do differently:
