



# CDOP Newsletter

for professionals

Reinforcing home safety messages • Latest home hazards

Issue 2

The Redbridge Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) was formed in 2008 and meets several times a year to review all child deaths in the borough. Its cross-disciplinary team of professionals identifies any lessons learnt and makes recommendations to the LSCB on how to improve children's health and wellbeing and how to prevent future child deaths. This newsletter for frontline staff is also available for professionals on [MARCo](http://www.find.redbridge.gov.uk/marco) [www.find.redbridge.gov.uk/marco](http://www.find.redbridge.gov.uk/marco)

## Marking Child Safety Week

Child safety week is 1st to 7th June this year and it provides a great opportunity to reinforce messages about safety around the home and to revisit how we, as frontline workers, can educate parents and check homes for safety hazards.

To mark Child Safety Week, Redbridge CDOP has produced an educational leaflet for parents and carers which will be available online at FIND [www.find.redbridge.gov.uk](http://www.find.redbridge.gov.uk) and on Redbridge i [www.redbridge.gov.uk](http://www.redbridge.gov.uk) as well as at Children's Centres. The leaflet takes the reader on a guided, room-by-room picture tour of a house, highlighting many safety hazards. Three of the hazards apply to very new inventions. **Can you guess what they are? Turn to page 4** to find out more about the dangers that they pose. The Redbridge CDOP leaflet for parents recommends asking Health Visitors for advice, if needed, on how to make homes safer places.

To find out more about Child Safety Week and to sign up for free resources from the Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT), please visit [www.capt.org.uk](http://www.capt.org.uk)



Redbridge CDOP leaflet for parents

## Why is it so important to prevent accidents in the home?

According to NHS Choices (Accidents To Children In The Home), one million children - aged under 15 - attend A&E every year because of accidents that occur in the home. Accidental injuries remain the most common cause of death in children aged over one, with choking, strangulation and drowning accidents generally being fatal.

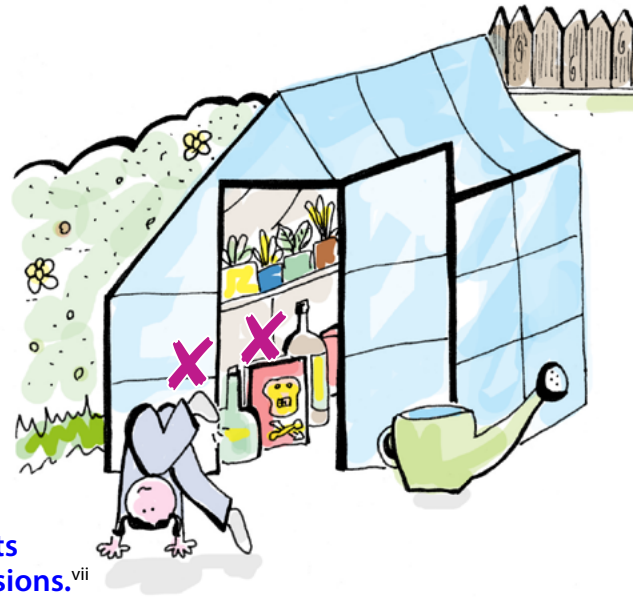
Public Health England has made reducing unintentional injuries around the home in the under-five age group a priority, with a particular focus on preventing five types of injury<sup>1</sup>:

- 1 **choking, suffocation and strangulation**
- 2 **falls**
- 3 **poisoning**
- 4 **burns and scalds**
- 5 **drowning**



## Some home accident statistics

- Choking, suffocation and strangulation are the top cause of unintentional deaths for under fives.<sup>ii</sup>
- Falls account for 44% of childhood home injuries.<sup>iii</sup>
- Hot drinks are the cause of most major burns in the under-five age group.<sup>iv</sup>
- Hot baths are the biggest cause of severe and fatal scalding injuries.<sup>v</sup>
- 37 children suffocated in bed during the 2008-12 period.<sup>vi</sup>
- 28,000 children receive treatment for poisoning every year. Medicines account for 70% of poisoning admissions and household chemicals – such as anti-freeze, cleaning products and garden products – account for 20% of poisoning admissions.<sup>vii</sup>
- Under fives in the most deprived areas of the country are 45% more likely to be admitted to A&E for unintentional injuries than children from the least deprived areas.<sup>viii</sup>
- Accidents are most likely to occur during summertime, school holidays, weekends and during late afternoon and early evenings.<sup>ix</sup>
- The most common places for accidents to occur are in the living room and dining room.<sup>x</sup>
- The most serious accidents tend to take place on the stairs and in the kitchen.<sup>xi</sup>



The consequences of an injury can have serious and lifelong implications. A fall from a high chair could result in a head injury and brain damage at a cost of £4.89m to the state over a lifetime (source: Public Health England Guidance – June 2014 [Reducing unintentional injuries in and around the home among children under 5 years](#)).

The emotional costs to the child and family are also huge. A toddler who is badly scalded and disfigured from hot bathwater will need years of painful skin graft operations – and later may get behind with schoolwork during multiple reconstructive surgeries.

## Our role as frontline workers

**Health and Social Care frontline workers are ideally placed to identify homes where children are at high risk of accidents.**

NICE guidance (PH30) recommends prioritising households where children are at the greatest risk of unintentional injuries. 'Priority households' could include those with children aged under five, families living in rented or overcrowded conditions or families on a low income. It could also include those living in a property where there is a lack of properly installed safety equipment.

### NICE recommends offering priority households

- home safety assessments and advice
- appropriate safety equipment such as door guards, cupboard locks, safety gates, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, thermostatic mixing valves for taps and window restrictors.



### Professional questions to ask myself

- Do I need further training to help myself or my team identify hazards in the home?
- Do I need further training to help myself or my team educate and advise families on how to make their homes safer and avoid home accidents?
- Am I noticing potential hazards when I make home visits?

# Some best practice ideas

**Use trusted relationships to get a message across.** For example, a breastfeeding support volunteer can explain about the dangers of holding a hot drink when feeding a baby. Some Children's Centres have a 'no hot drinks policy' in rooms where parents and children are together. Explaining the policy to the group provides another way to educate about the dangers of hot drinks.

**Help low-income families with a dual approach.** It can be very difficult for low-income families to afford to make their homes safer. Research shows that providing safety education and free or low-cost safety equipment is effective in improving home safety and can reduce inequalities in some home safety practices.

**Get dads involved, too.** In Brook, Cornwall, an ongoing evening group was set up for young fathers under the age of 25 to educate about safety around the home. Ed Hart, who ran the group, said: "For our safety activity we arrange a room with lots of different risks in it and then we talk about each of them. Everyone gets really into it – young fathers often have a strong protective instinct and see safety as one of their roles. The young dads spot most of the hazards very quickly but there's usually a few things that they haven't thought about before, such as window blind cords."

For more best practice ideas see [www.makingthelink.net/case-studies](http://www.makingthelink.net/case-studies)

## Professional questions to ask ourselves

- What in Redbridge are we doing well to promote safety at home?
- What do we need to be doing better?

## Summertime

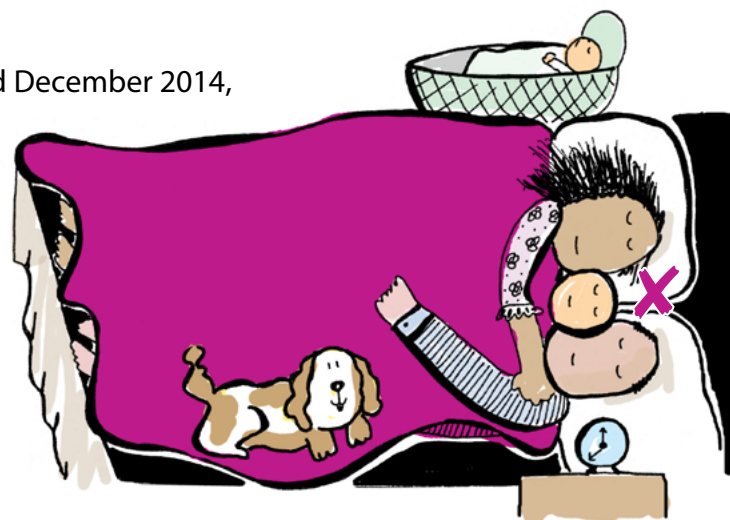
Summertime brings particular risks. With open windows and balconies, parents need to protect against falls. Playing in gardens with ponds, swimming pools, paddling pools and other water features puts children and toddlers at risk of drowning. Refer parents to our earlier leaflet on preventing home drownings: Redbridge i – [Keeping Your Little One Safe Around Water](#).



## Co-sleeping dangers

In accordance with NICE guidelines on co-sleeping, issued December 2014, please remind parents of the associations between co-sleeping and greater risk of SIDS when:

- The parents or carers smoke
- The parents or carers have recently consumed alcohol
- The parents or carers use drugs
- The baby was born prematurely and/or had a low birth weight.



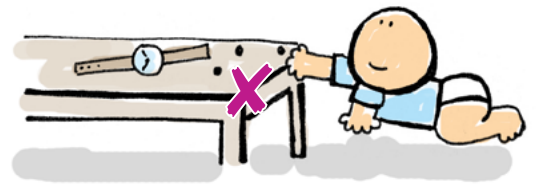
Co-sleeping can refer to sleeping with a baby in a bed, on a chair or on a sofa.

Please use the Lullaby Trust as a resource for parents <http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep> and for your own professional education <http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/promotingsafebabycare>. Its educational leaflets on promoting safer sleep for babies are available free of charge.

# Answer to the question on page one:

## what three new everyday inventions pose a danger to children?

As mentioned on page one, new technology and inventions bring about new risks. Here are three items to educate parents about: liquitabs, button batteries and e-cigarette refills. These are all mentioned in the educational leaflet that Redbridge CDOP has produced for parents.



**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, they are tempting to children and toddlers and need to be kept out of sight and reach.

Manufacturers will have until the end of 2015 to comply with EU regulations that come into force on June 1, 2015 stipulating that the tabs need to taste bitter and have a safety warning on the packaging for parents.

**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.

**E-cigarette refills** are deadly when swallowed and need to be kept out of a child's reach.

### Professional question

What two actions can I take to integrate the messages of Child Safety Week into my work?

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_

- <sup>i</sup> Public Health England: [Reducing unintentional injuries in and around the home among children under 5 years](#) – June 2014
- <sup>ii</sup> Public Health England: [Reducing unintentional injuries in and around the home among children under 5 years](#) – June 2014
- <sup>iii</sup> NHS Choices – Accidents to Children In The Home – How To Prevent Accidents  
<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Accidents-to-children-in-the-home/Pages/How-to-prevent-accidents.aspx>
- <sup>iv</sup> NHS Choices – Accidents to Children In The Home – How To Prevent Accidents
- <sup>v</sup> NHS Choices – Accidents to Children In The Home – How To Prevent Accidents
- <sup>vi</sup> Public Health England: Reducing unintentional injuries in and around the home among children under 5 years – June 2014
- <sup>vii</sup> Public Health England: Reducing unintentional injuries in and around the home among children under 5 years – June 2014
- <sup>viii</sup> Public Health England: Reducing unintentional injuries in and around the home among children under 5 years – June 2014
- <sup>ix</sup> NHS Choices – Accidents To Children In The Home – Introduction  
<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/accidents-to-children-in-the-home/Pages/Introduction.aspx>
- <sup>x</sup> NHS Choices – Accidents To Children In The Home – Introduction
- <sup>xi</sup> NHS Choices – Accidents To Children In The Home – Introduction

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