Optimum Internal Medicine & Pediatrics
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Childproofing Checklist

An age-by-age home safety guide for parents and caregivers.

Start before your child reaches the next milestone. Ages are a guide, not a guarantee: rolling, crawling, climbing and opening doors may begin earlier than expected. Keep earlier protections in place when still needed, including for younger visitors. No home or device is completely childproof; active adult supervision is essential.

Child / family: _____ Date checked: _____

Every age and every home

- ☐ Lock medicines, vitamins, cleaning products, laundry pods, alcohol, nicotine and cannabis out of sight and reach. Keep products in original containers; child-resistant caps are not childproof. Secure visitors' bags too. [2]
- ☐ Use child-resistant cabinet latches and door locks for hazardous areas. Check that they latch after each use. Adults must be able to open doors quickly in an emergency; never lock a child in a room. [1]
- ☐ Protect outlets with secure, child-resistant covers or plates too large to choke on. When replacing outlets, use tamper-resistant receptacles installed by a qualified person. Keep cords and power strips inaccessible. [1]
- ☐ Anchor dressers, shelving and TVs; install the range's anti-tip bracket. Keep climbable furniture away from windows. Use cordless window coverings and keep all cords out of reach. [1]
- ☐ Use window guards or opening limits of 4 inches or less; screens do not prevent falls. Preserve required emergency escape routes and quick adult release where needed. [1]
- ☐ Test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms monthly. Install smoke alarms on each level, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas; follow local rules and manufacturer instructions for CO alarms. Practice a fire escape plan. [1, 4]
- ☐ Set the water heater no higher than 120°F and test bath water before use. Keep hot drinks, appliances, matches and lighters inaccessible. [1, 4]
- ☐ The safest home for children has no firearms. If present, keep them unloaded and locked, with ammunition locked separately; children must not access keys or combinations. [4]

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Birth through 6 months

Prepare for rolling before it starts. Continue safe sleep practices through the first birthday. [3]

- ☐ Put baby on their back for every sleep in a safety-approved crib, bassinet or play yard with a firm, flat, level mattress and fitted sheet only. No pillows, loose blankets, bumpers, toys, positioners or weighted sleep products. [3]
- ☐ Share a room, not a bed, ideally for at least the first 6 months. Never sleep with baby on a couch or armchair. Move a sleeping baby from a swing or sitting device to a safe sleep surface as soon as possible. [3]
- ☐ Stop swaddling as soon as baby shows signs of trying to roll. Keep cribs away from windows, blind cords, monitor cords and other reachable cords. Follow sleep-product limits. Remove mobiles by 5 months or when baby pushes up on hands and knees, whichever is first. [3, 5]
- ☐ Keep a hand on baby on a changing surface. Never leave baby on a bed, sofa or other raised surface unattended. Use restraints as directed; they do not replace supervision. [5]
- ☐ Keep hot food and drinks away while holding baby. Check bath temperature and keep baby within arm's reach in water; bath seats are not safety devices. [4, 6]

6 through 12 months

Crawling, pulling up and reaching open new hazards. Get down to your child's eye level and check every room.

- ☐ Install safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs before baby is mobile. At the top, use a gate approved for that location and screwed securely to the wall; never a pressure-mounted or pet gate. Follow all installation instructions. [1]
- ☐ Check gate latches and anchors regularly. Follow the gate's height, age and developmental limits. Once a child can climb over or open it, do not rely on it; reassess stair access and supervision. [7]
- ☐ Lower the crib mattress before baby can sit; use its lowest position before baby can stand. Follow the manufacturer's limits and stop using the crib if baby can climb out. [5]
- ☐ Sweep floors and low shelves for coins, small toy parts and broken balloons. Keep button batteries and small high-powered magnets inaccessible; secure battery compartments. Separate older children's small toys. [2, 8, 9]
- ☐ Seat and supervise baby while eating. Choose textures and pieces suited to development; avoid hard, round or sticky choking hazards. Keep plastic bags and packaging away. [5, 10]
- ☐ Lock bathroom doors or use appropriate latches; empty tubs and buckets immediately and close toilet lids with a child-resistant lock. Never leave baby alone near any water. [6]

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1 through 3 years

Toddlers climb, imitate adults and solve locks. Safety rules alone are not reliable protection.

- ☐ Recheck furniture anchors, window protection, door locks and cabinet latches as your child grows. Keep stools and chairs away from counters, windows and locked storage. [1, 4]
- ☐ Do not keep using an outgrown or climbable gate. Arrange safer access control and hands-on stair practice with an adult; keep stairways clear and well lit. [7]
- ☐ Use back stove burners when possible and turn pot handles away from edges. Keep appliance cords, knives and hot appliances inaccessible; keep children away from cooking and fireplaces. [4]
- ☐ Keep eating seated and supervised. Cut round foods such as grapes lengthwise into quarters; avoid whole nuts, popcorn, hard candy and similar choking hazards. [10]
- ☐ Keep exterior doors secured without blocking emergency escape. Check yards, garages, driveways and neighboring water hazards before outdoor play. Never leave a child alone in a vehicle. [4, 6]

Pool and water safety at every age

- ☐ Prevent unsupervised pool or spa access with a four-sided isolation fence at least 4 feet high, separating the pool from the house and yard. Follow stricter local requirements. Gates must self-close and self-latch, with latches beyond children's reach. [6]
- ☐ Never prop a pool gate open. Remove nearby climbable objects and pool toys after use. Secure doors and pet doors leading toward water. Alarms and covers are extra layers, not substitutes for fencing or supervision. [6]
- ☐ Assign a sober, attentive adult water watcher without phone distractions. Stay within arm's reach of toddlers and weak swimmers. Never assign this responsibility to another child. [6, 11]
- ☐ Use properly fitted US Coast Guard-approved life jackets when appropriate; inflatable floaties are not safety equipment. Swimming lessons do not make a child drown-proof. Empty small portable pools after use. [6, 11]

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3 through 5 years

- ☐ Keep medicines, chemicals, batteries, magnets and firearms secured even when your child knows the rules. Recheck locks they may now be able to open. [2, 8, 9]
- ☐ Practice safe stair use, staying away from hot surfaces and calling an adult for help. Supervise cooking, baths, outdoor play and water activities. [4, 6]
- ☐ Teach your child to tell an adult about a found gun, unknown medicine or small battery without touching it. Review the home address, emergency calling and the family fire meeting place. [4, 8]

6 years and older

Growing independence means new responsibilities, not the end of home safety.

- ☐ Keep hazardous items locked. Teach children never to put batteries or magnets in their mouth and to tell an adult immediately if one may have been swallowed. [8, 9]
- ☐ Agree on age-appropriate rules for cooking, tools and electrical appliances. Provide adult supervision until skills and judgment are reliable; keep younger children away from the work area.
- ☐ Continue pool barriers and attentive adult water supervision. Review water rules with every caregiver; older children are not a substitute for an adult water watcher. [11]
- ☐ Keep toys, hobby parts and medicines away from younger siblings and visitors. Recheck the home after rearranging furniture, moving or introducing new products. [2]
- ☐ Practice how to call 911, state the home address, leave during a fire and meet outside. Make sure children know which trusted adults to contact in an emergency. [4]

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Emergency readiness

Call 911 for trouble breathing, unresponsiveness, seizures or another life-threatening emergency. For a possible poisoning, call US Poison Help at 1-800-222-1222 promptly; do not induce vomiting. [2]

Suspected swallowed button battery or magnet: seek emergency medical care immediately, even if your child seems well. Do not wait for symptoms. Poison Help can provide immediate instructions while you arrange care. [8, 9]

☐ Save emergency numbers, learn infant and child CPR and choking first aid, and review the plan with every caregiver. [11]

Home address: _____
Caregiver / phone: _____
Pediatric clinician / phone: _____

Sources and review

Prepared for family education. This checklist is not exhaustive or a substitute for individualized medical advice, product instructions, building codes or adult supervision. Sources reviewed October 29, 2026.

[1] CPSC: Childproofing Your Home
[2] AAP HealthyChildren: Childproofing Your Home for Poisons
[3] AAP HealthyChildren: How to Keep Your Sleeping Baby Safe
[4] AAP HealthyChildren: Safety for Your Child 1 to 2 Years
[5] AAP HealthyChildren: Make Baby's Room Safe
[6] AAP HealthyChildren: Drowning Prevention for Curious Toddlers
[7] CPSC: Gates and Enclosures
[8] AAP HealthyChildren: Button Batteries and Lithium Coin Batteries
[9] CPSC: Magnets
[10] AAP HealthyChildren: Choking Prevention and First Aid
[11] CDC: Preventing Drowning