



## TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT...



# Personal Safety

Avoiding Accidents and Crime

If you're like most parents, you're probably anxious about your child's safety in an increasingly dangerous world. Accidents and crime pose a grave threat to children. But talking about personal safety with your child can go a long way toward reducing these risks.

### **Accidents: The No. 1 Childhood Hazard**

Accidents kill more than 8,000 children a year, making them the leading cause of childhood death. Traffic crashes are the biggest threat, followed by drowning, fires and burns, choking, firearms, falling, poisoning and electric shock.

There are some basic precautions your child can take to avoid such accidents. First and foremost, teach your child to call 911 (or the correct number for your area) in an emergency. Show your children the safest route to school and make sure they know to cross streets only at crosswalks or on a green light. Have your children learn to swim and warn them never to swim unsupervised.

Fire safety should involve the whole family. Explain the house-

hold fire escape plan to your children. Tell them to "stop, drop, and roll," not to run, if their clothes ever catch on fire. To keep them from choking, teach them to cut up food into small, manageable pieces and chew slowly.

In case your children ever find guns in anyone's house, teach them that firearms are not toys and should never be played with.

Warn your child not to climb tall trees or high ladders, or onto the roof of your house. Teach them that chewable vitamins are not candy. They should not consume vitamins—or any other pills or medicines—unless you tell them to.

Finally, to prevent electric shock, tell your children not to fly kites near power lines and never to put their fingers in any electrical outlet.

### **Keep Your Child Safe From Crime**

Without frightening your children unnecessarily, you can give them some tips on avoiding crime. Teach them to avoid such dangerous areas as abandoned buildings, wooded areas and dark streets. Tell them never to get

close enough to a car so the occupant can jump out and grab them. And, of course, your child should never hitchhike or accept a ride from a stranger.

### **Help Your Children to Protect Themselves**

Overprotecting your children may harm their developing sense of independence if it keeps them from learning from their own mistakes. Allow them as much as possible to deal with problems on their own, but give them the knowledge they need to avoid harm.

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