



WHAT WE DID
 We scoured the stores to bring you the most useful child-safety products to make sure your home is safe for your baby.

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Childproofing your home

We outline the essential safety equipment to childproof your home, give you tips on how to keep your baby safe and also explain child-safety product symbols

Parents make every possible effort to ensure their children are safe, particularly when they are outside the security of their homes. But unseen dangers can lurk even inside the house, and it pays to childproof your home to prevent mishaps. We've scoured the stores to bring you the most useful child-safety products and give you tips and tricks to make sure that your home is safe for your baby.

'Children are the most creative thinkers – using items in ways that are not intended. So sticking their finger in a power socket or pulling out a drawer and

using it as support are things they will not think twice about. Childproofing your home, although not a substitute for adult supervision, helps cut down the risks of your child getting injured,' says Niyatee Sharma, designer and founder of Squiggle Furniture, a furniture brand for children.

GETTING STARTED

First, take a baby's eye-view of your home. Get down on your hands and knees (at your child's eye level) and see if anything harmful is within reach, or if there's something your child could get tangled up in or trip over while crawling or walking. Cupboards, drawers and sharp corners need attention. This will help you notice almost every lurking danger while childproofing your house.

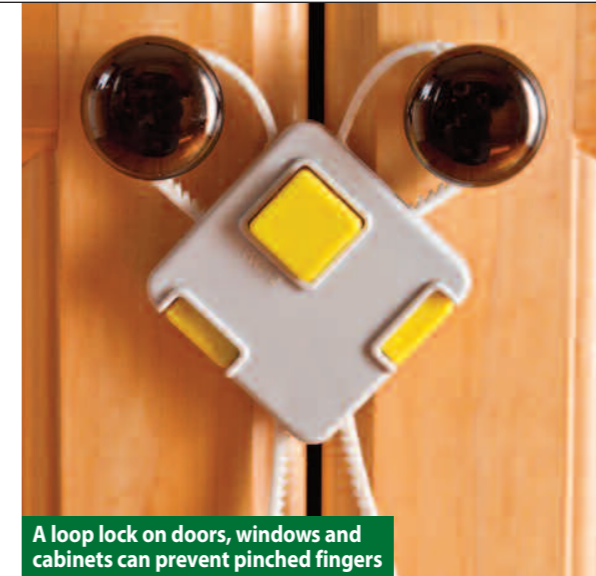
RISKS AND TIPS

CHOKING

Put away tiny objects that your child could pick off the floor and swallow, such as coins, beads and paper clips. Make sure pen caps are not lying around and are tightly secured to the pen because they could be choking hazards for the baby.

LOCKED-OUT

Fix a chain latch on top of the main door to keep your baby from opening the door and running out. You could also use knob covers to ensure that your child doesn't turn the doorknob and lets himself out.



A loop lock on doors, windows and cabinets can prevent pinched fingers



Buy sturdy cover plugs for power sockets

LOCKED-IN

Lock the doors (the door latch should be placed at a height so that the baby cannot reach it and lock himself in). You can also install door-slam stoppers to prevent your baby from accidentally locking himself in the house.

GERMS

Make sure that the shoes worn outside the house by family or guests are left at the door, preferably on a shoe-rack. Our cities are filled with filth and you don't want your baby to fall sick by crawling in muck and possibly ingesting it.

SECURE WITH LATCHES

Secure drawers, cabinets and refrigerators with latches and loop locks. This way, your child's fingers cannot get jammed when they try to open and close them.

Children need to be protected from cupboards, and sharp corners

SUFFOCATION

Plastic bags and wrappers must go into the bin immediately so that your baby can't get to them. These can put him at risk of suffocation if he attempts to swallow them.

UNSTABLE FURNITURE

Arrange furniture and electronics by the walls so that they don't fall on your child if he pulls on them for support. Also, avoid placing any furniture by the window so that your child does not try to climb up on to the sill.

ELECTROCUTION

Buy sturdy cover plugs for power sockets and remember to plug them back in after using the socket. This is to prevent your child from putting his fingers into the power sockets.

'KEEPING FURNITURE AWAY WAS NOT ENOUGH'



Nagma Hasan, 27, a journalist from Mumbai and a mother of a 16-month-old boy, decided to childproof her home after her son began to crawl.

'My home is pretty spacious because we don't have too much furniture or decorative items. My husband and I felt that it was okay not to childproof our home because we thought our son would be safe. But a couple of months after he began crawling, he accidentally banged his head on the kitchen drawer while pulling it out, which led to a big bump. A few days later, his toe got caught in the door. He also began pulling at

the tablecloth and playing with the electric switches. We realised that just keeping furniture and electric cords away was not enough. We then consulted experts and checked the internet for ways to childproof our house. I was surprised to know about so many products available in the market – at decent rates – for childproofing the house.

'Children by nature are curious, and now, after childproofing our house, though we still keep a constant check on him, we are a bit more relaxed when our son goes exploring around the house.'

CHILDPROOFING YOUR HOME: THE CHECKLIST

We take a look around your home to spot the seemingly harmless situations that can be dangerous for small children and tell you what you can do to keep your curious baby safe from mishap as he crawls or toddles around to scope out the territory

1 FURNITURE

UNSTABLE FURNITURE

Get rid of unstable furniture as it may give way and fall on your child. As a safety precaution, arrange furniture and electronics to the walls.

Secure drawers with cabinet latches so that your child's fingers cannot get jammed when they try to open and close them.

SHARP EDGES

Cover the sharp edges and corners of tables with cushioned corner covers. These padded covers protect your child from sharp table or counter-top corners.

FURNITURE PLACEMENT

Avoid placing your furniture by windows so your child does not try to climb up on to the sill.

TABLES

Your child can pull off the tablecloth and everything on it and hurt themselves, so avoid using long tablecloths.

Keep crockery, flatware, water bottles, vases and electronics away from table edges, so that your child can't reach up and pull them down.

2 STAIRCASES

If you live in a two-storey house, use safety gates at the bottom and top of staircases.

Make sure the ones at the top of the gate are secured to the wall.

Check that neither gate has a space large enough for a child's head to get stuck in.

3 WATER HAZARDS

Keep the floor dry to avoid injury from slips and falls. Put a non-skid mat in the bathtub to prevent slipping.

Keep the child away from filled bathtubs and buckets, because children can drown even in very little water or drink unpotable water and get sick.

Never leave babies unattended in the bath, not even for short periods of time.

The toilet lid should be closed when not in use.

PETS

Pets can be carriers of various diseases. Always wash your hands after playing with your pet.

Give your pet flea treatment at night, when your baby's asleep, so the medication has time to dry thoroughly.

Teach children to not touch tick and flea collars as these are medicated and mildly toxic. Don't let your pet climb into beds or on to sofas.

Always supervise your child while playing with your pet as the animals size or enthusiasm might harm baby accidentally. Teach the child and animal to respect each other's space, food and toys.

If your animal bites, even in play, try to avoid too much interaction till the child is big enough to not get injured.

CAREGIVERS

Whether your mum, the maid or your babysitter, caregivers need clear instructions on even basic things if you're leaving your child with them. Inform the caregiver of allergies and medical needs beforehand to help avoid emergencies later on.

Make sure that the person looking after your child is healthy enough to do so. If your parent is elderly or frail, hire a nanny that can do the more active running around, while the elders supervise.

Do a background check on hired help and as far as possible speak to previous employers. Unannounced spot checks to see how your child is really being looked after when you are not there are important, especially if your child isn't old enough to talk.

Keep a list of important emergency contacts with caregivers, along with information on where and how they can reach you.

7 CRIBS

Do a thorough check of the crib before you put the baby into it. Make sure it is free of electric blankets, heating pads, stuffed toys, insects (such as spiders or roaches) and mobile phones and gadgets.

Keep the crib away from windows, high chairs and play pen and shelving.

Make sure there is just one-finger space between the crib mattress and the slide rails to prevent the baby slipping between the mattress and crib.

Even while you make sure that the crib is sturdy, remember to check the space between the slats. They should be 2 3/8 inches apart or less so baby's head can't get caught between them.

If your baby is prone to allergies, invest in hypoallergenic pillows and mattress.

A baby intercom is a good idea if the baby sleeps in a different room.

KITCHEN

Keep your child away from heat, flames, sharp knives – in short, the kitchen.

Lock up cleaning products, medicines and supplements, scrapers, knives and forks.

Never carry your child while cooking in the kitchen.

Use the stove's back burners for cooking and turn pot handles inward so that a toddler can't reach them.

If your child is learning to feed itself, start with using plastic, melamine or stainless cups and plates instead of glass.

ESSENTIALS FOR CHILDPROOFING YOUR HOME

Once you've identified the risks, buying these useful gadgets will help you childproof your home and keep your baby safe. While you may be able to get by without them, these clever devices will give you added peace of mind. The costs can vary between ₹200 and ₹12,000. These products are available at all leading stores across the country.

DREAMBABY NON-SLIP BATH SUCTION MATS

Price ₹349

Use These anti-skid mats protect your child from falling
Availability KinderHomes (kinderhomes.com)



DREAMBABY MINI MULTIPURPOSE LATCHES

Price ₹275

Use Install latches on cabinet drawers and doors to prevent your baby from slamming them.
Availability Mom & Me (momandme.in), KinderHomes (kinderhomes.com)



DREAMBABY DOORKNOB COVERS

Price ₹299

Use Prevent children from accessing areas such as bathrooms, kitchens, and garages.
Availability Mom & Me (momandme.in)



DREAMBABY FLEXI LOOP LOCKS

Price ₹199

Use These window latches ensure that your child does not push open windows
Availability KinderHomes (kinderhomes.com), Mom & Me (momandme.in)



DREAMBABY CORNER CUSHIONS

Price ₹150

Use Affix corner cushions on sharp edges of your furniture
Availability KinderHomes (kinderhomes.com), Mom & Me (momandme.in), hushbabies.com



DREAMBABY DOOR STOPPERS

Price ₹275

Use Prevent children from accidentally locking themselves in or out of a room
Availability Mom & Me (momandme.in), hushbabies.com



DREAMBABY LATCHES

Price ₹275

Use They help to hold the toilet seat down
Availability Mom & Me (momandme.in)



DREAMBABY REFRIGERATOR LATCHES

Price ₹125

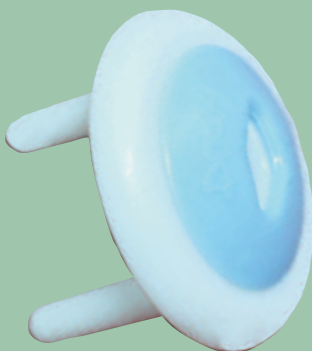
Use Prevent children from opening refrigerators
Availability Mom & Me (momandme.in)



DUCK SWITCH BOARD GUARDS

Price ₹200

Use Outlet plugs to be installed on all power sockets to prevent shocks
Availability Mom & Me (momandme.in), hushbabies.com



FIRST-AID KIT FOR BABIES



While pre-packaged first-aid kits contain several essential items, it is good to add extra items, that you may require, to the kit. Another alternative is to build one from scratch (see 'First Aid, First,' May 2012, p66). Here is a list of things you would need for a kit for babies.

- Infant/child thermometer.
- Liquid pain reliever for children recommended by your doctor.
- A decongestant or cough syrup recommended by your doctor.



Toy safety

Mubashir Ahmedi, a member of Toy Association of India, Mumbai, lists the safety concerns you should be aware of before buying a toy for your child.



- Read the recommended age group mentioned on the packaging. Don't buy toys intended for older children because they may have small parts that can pose choking hazards.
- Use an empty toilet paper roll as a measure for safety – anything that filters through the roll is not safe for a child under three.
- Make sure the child can't open the toy's battery compartment. Don't let him sleep with a battery-operated toy.
- To store toys, use a toy box without a lid because it might hurt your child. Keep older siblings' toys out of reach, preferably in a separate room.
- Loud toys such as phones, horns or squeaky rubber toys can produce high levels of noise leading to damage and even hearing loss. Always test the 'Try Me' button to judge the level of noise. Don't let your child hold such toys near their ears.
- Look for toys that are well-made with tightly secured parts, for example,

Test the 'Try Me' button to judge the level of noise in loud toys

Our expert lists the things to look out for while buying toys for your baby

- dolls with fixed eyes and nose.
- Immediately discard plastic wrapping on toys. Plastic wrappings can cause suffocation.

SAFETY SYMBOLS FOR TOYS AND WHAT THEY MEAN

CE A manufacturer's declaration that its product meets the basic European Union's (EU) safety, health or environmental requirements.

ISI The ISI mark given by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is a third party guarantee of quality before going on sale. BIS does quality checks on the product and provides an ISI mark.

Battery symbol This symbol is found on batteries and toys containing batteries. A marking with the appropriate chemical symbol is required for batteries containing more than 0.0005% mercury (Hg), more than 0.002% cadmium (Cd) and/or more than 0.004% lead (Pb).

0-3 This symbol indicates that the product may be unsuitable for children under three years because it might contain small detachable parts, which could be choking hazards for children.

TOP FIVE USEFUL BABY PRODUCTS

ELECTRIC STEAM STERILISER

Using an electric steam steriliser kit can be a quick and easy way to sterilise your baby's bottles if you are using formula or milk. They typically cost between ₹2,500 and ₹5,000.

TRAVEL COT

Travel cots are portable cots you can fold and put in a bag to take away. The price range varies depending on the brand and design. It can cost between ₹5,000 and ₹12,000.

DIGITAL EAR THERMOMETER

A digital ear thermometer gives a quick temperature reading for your child and helps identify signs of fever. They cost anywhere between ₹2,000 and ₹3,500. For tips on what to stock in your baby's first-aid kit see 'First-aid kit for babies,' below.

BED RAIL SUPPORTER

The bed rail supporter protects your child from falling out of bed. It can be secured by straps under the mattress and adjusted to fit more beds. It costs anywhere between ₹3,500 and ₹5,000.

BABY CHANGE BAG

The advantage of a specifically designed baby change bag is that it usually has different compartments to help you find what you need quickly, plus many come with a foldaway changing mat. Prices start from under ₹500, but you could spend over ₹3,000 for a designer one.

GET A TEAM TO ASSESS IF YOUR HOME IS SAFE FOR BABY

Safe Baby, a Mumbai-based company dedicated to making homes safe for children, was started two years ago by Sachin Agarwal and Shalini Ahuja Agarwal. 'We offer childproofing solutions for homes,' says Sachin. 'When we get a request to childproof homes, we send a team to visit the place and take a look around. After a customised baby safety assessment, we point out all the possible hazards and solutions for the same. We also offer child-safety products and conduct safety and child CPR workshops for families, nannies and architects.'

Contact (022) 40501000