

# Safe kids



## March 16-22 is National Poison Prevention Week

**New London** — Poison control centers in the United States receive 1.2 million calls each year as a result of accidental poisoning of children ages 5 and under. Nearly 90 percent of these toxic exposures occur in the home, and 60 percent involve non-pharmaceutical products such as cosmetics, cleansers, personal care products, plants, pesticides, art supplies, alcohol and toys.

March 16-22 is National Poison Prevention Week, an annual program established by Congress in 1961 to spread the message that **children act fast...so do poisons!** "It doesn't take much to make a small child sick," said Esther Pendola, coordinator of Safe Kids. "Kids have faster metabolisms than adults and anything they ingest will be absorbed into the bloodstream very quickly."

Child-resistant packaging is credited with saving hundreds of children's lives since its introduction in the 1970s, and childhood lead poisoning declined by 80 percent in the 15 years after unleaded gasoline and paint became industry standards. Still, there is no substitute for active supervision and

childproofing. "If a product label says 'keep out of reach of children,' there's a reason," said Pendola. "Keep it up high and in a locked cabinet."

Safe Kids reminds parents to keep the poison control hotline number handy. "Memorize this toll-free number: **800-222-1222**," Esther Pendola said. "Keep it near every phone in your home and program it into your cell phone." From anywhere in the United States, this number connects to the local poison control center.

"Call 911, not poison control, if a child is choking, having trouble breathing or having a seizure," said Pendola. "Follow the 911 operator's instructions. Do not induce vomiting or give the child any fluid or medication unless directed."

Continued on page 3.

## Child Safety Seat Inspections

Tuesdays & Thursdays – 4-7 PM, Lawrence & Memorial Hospital,  
1<sup>st</sup> level of the Parking Garage

Wednesdays 10-1 PM Mohegan Tribe  
Eagle View Garage, Sandy Desert Road, Uncasville

1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the Month  
Norwich Fire Department, 10 North Thames Street



*Please note:  
All Car Seat Checks are by  
Appointment ONLY!!!!*

*Please bring your car seat,  
directions to the car seat,  
and the owner's manual for  
your vehicle.*

**Call: (860) 442 - 0733**



## Tweens & Car Safety

As our middle-schoolers are getting older, many of them want to take on more “grown-up” behaviors. Some things already on your child’s list may include, babysitting a younger sibling or neighbor, going to the movies with a group of friends (minus a parent chaperone) and sitting in the front seat of the car. All of these events require maturity, responsibility and a sense of trust between you and your child. However, when it comes to seating positions in a motor vehicle, the single, most important, life-saving decision parents can make for their growing child, is to have them buckle up in the rear seat on every trip, every time.

Motor vehicle crashes continue to be the leading cause of injury and death for children under the age of 14. In a frontal crash, passenger airbags deploy at roughly 200 miles per hour. In conjunction with seat belts, airbags are designed to protect adult passengers, not children. The current recommendation from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration states that children ages 13 and under should remain properly restrained in the back seat of the car. Since their inception in the 1980’s, airbags have become more “advanced.” Second generation airbags, and airbags with built in weight sensors can still seriously injure children. Even though your child may be as tall as you are, or weigh as much as you do, it is important to remember that their bones are still forming. A child’s bones are not as strong as a fully mature adult; therefore, our kids are still susceptible to serious injuries or death from sitting in the front seat of a car equipped with a passenger airbag.

Life is not a textbook. When kids must sit in the front seat (pickup truck, 2-seater sports car, all other seating positions in the vehicle are taken, your child has special needs that you must attend to) there are a few precautions that can be taken. If your vehicle is equipped with an airbag on/off switch, turn the position to off.

Move the seat as far back, away from the airbag as possible, and make sure the vehicle’s lap and shoulder belt fit your child properly (across the strongest points; the hips/thighs and the shoulder/chest). A child should never ride with the shoulder portion of a lap/shoulder belt behind their back. Doing this provides no protection to their chest, which includes such vital organs as the heart and lungs.

Amid all of the technology, options and variations with motor vehicles, many parents are still faced with the challenge of determining seating positions for multiple child occupants. There are tens of thousands of certified child passenger safety technicians located in communities across the United States who can talk to, and assist parents individually about different seating configurations.

For more information regarding this service, please contact Safe Kids New London County @ (860) 442-0733. Safe Kids is a department of Lawrence & Memorial Hospital’s Community Health Outreach and Partnerships.

## ½ of all children are bitten by a dog by the time they are 12 years old!

What are some of the ways to prevent children from getting bit by an animal?

- ✓ *Teaching children to ask permission before they pet a dog*
- ✓ *Stand still and let dog sniff you that’s how dogs get to know you*
- ✓ *Never run when a strange dog approaches you*
- ✓ *Don’t start into the dogs eyes – they consider it a challenge*
- ✓ *To speak quietly and approach the animal slowly*
- ✓ *Turn hand palm down and let dog sniff it*
- ✓ *Do not pet dog on head or near mouth*
- ✓ *Never scream and run.*
- ✓ *If the dog does attack, “feed” him your jacket, purse, bicycle, or anything that you can put between yourself and the dog.*

# Home Safety Tips

## Crib Safety

- Always lock side rails
- Corner posts should be 1/16 of an inch or shorter
- Distance of crib slats should be 2 3/8 or less

## Bath Time Safety

- Children **must** be watched every second in the bathroom
- Set your water heater at 120 degrees or less
- Always check bath water for 'hot spots'
- Consider anti-scald devices for faucets or showerheads

## Stairs and Furniture Safety

- Never leave baby unattended
- Keep one hand on baby when changing diaper
- Use safety gates at top and bottom of stairs

## Safeguarding windows

- Install safety guards on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and higher windows
- Never place a crib near a window
- Use safety tassels or cord windups with curtains or blinds

## Carbon/Smoke Detectors

- Even small amounts of carbon monoxide can cause life threatening illness or death in young children
- Place carbon monoxide detectors near the sleeping area.
- Additional detectors on every level and in every bedroom of a home provide extra protection.
- Check smoke alarms once a month
- Plan and practice home escape routes



## Quick Facts

### Motor Vehicle Safety

*Motor vehicle crashes are the leading killer of children under 14. Nationwide, crashes kill more than 1,300 kids a year and injure more than 200,000.*

*Approximately 73 percent of all child passenger restraints are used incorrectly — more than 80 percent of car seats and 40 percent of booster seats.*

*Children who have outgrown a car seat need to be restrained in a booster seat until they're about 8 years old and about 5 feet tall.*

*Properly used, a car seat reduces the risk of death by 71 percent for rear-facing infants and 54 percent for forward-facing toddlers; a booster seat reduces the risk of death by 59 percent for children ages 4 to 8.*

## Poison Safety Cont.

Safe Kids offers these additional tips:

- *Get your home tested for lead.* Kids inhale the dust of lead-based paint and can build up enough lead in their blood to affect intelligence, growth and development. In 2002, there were 310,000 children ages 6 and under with elevated blood lead levels. Lead-based paint was used in homes until 1978, so it's important to have older homes tested.
- *Install a carbon monoxide detector in every sleeping area.* Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless gas that builds up around fuel-burning appliances — and cars in garages — and is present in tobacco smoke. It can make a child seriously ill in concentrations that would barely affect an adult.
- *Stay alert while using cleaning products or other potentially harmful substances.* A child can be poisoned in a matter of seconds. Never leave kids alone with an open container of something you wouldn't want them to ingest.
- *Don't refer to medicine or vitamins as candy.* Children should not think of therapeutic substances as treats. And when you are administering medicine to your children, follow dosage directions carefully.