

## SAFE GUARDING YOUNG ONES AT HOME

Sherri Bobzien

Accidents will happen. To children, and grown-ups, too. While most adults know better than to stick a fork into a live toaster, or to drink the Drano, little ones don't. In fact, children between the ages one and two are the most accident prone people, according to the American Association of Pediatrics (AAP). Here are some tips on how to make your home safer for your children and to keep them free from danger.

### The Living Room:

For those of you with very young children, the best place to start looking for dangers in your home is on the floor. See how the world looks to a one-year-old. Electrical outlets should be covered, and empty sockets inserted with safety plugs. Frayed lamp cords are a hazard and should be repaired or replaced. Remember, little people love playing with dangling cords, so make sure all drapery strings are tied up and out of reach. Children can get tangled up in them and injure themselves.

Tablecloths dangling within a child's reach should be removed for a while, and sharp corners on coffee tables should be covered. (Try slicing a tennis ball in half to put on corners.)

### The Kitchen:

The kitchen is an especially dangerous place for toddlers. Children should never be left unattended in the kitchen, especially when any appliances are in use.

Child-proof all lower cabinets, and for extra safety, remove all cleansers, ammonia products and other toxic items from the cabinets. Children will put anything in their mouths, so remove all items small enough to swallow, as well.

Remember that most poisonings occur when a parent leaves a child alone. Never leave a child alone, even for a minute, while you're cleaning. If you have to leave the room for any reason, put the product out of reach and take your child with you. A severe accident can happen in a split-second.

Keep knives and other sharp objects out of reach of children. Trash cans can also pose a danger to curious children. Broken glass, or tiny things to swallow can be hazardous. Put the trash out of sight and keep a secure lid on it. When cooking, place pots and pans on back burners so handles don't hang over the edge. Boiling water or soup can cause serious injury. Children may pull on the handles or you may bump them yourself, sending a scalding splash to a toddler.

Keep all small appliances on the counter unplugged and away from the edges. Also, a dangling iron cord is fascinating to a child, so be especially careful with them.

### The Bathroom:

The most important rule is that a child should never be left alone in the bathroom. Babies have been known to drown in a puddle in the tub, and others have fallen into the toilet. Plastic doorknob covers are available that make it difficult to get into rooms that are "off-limits."

Put no-skid stickers on the bottom of the tub. (Slipping in the tub is one of the most common accidents for children and adults.) Be very careful about water temperature for your child, too. Their skin is much more sensitive than adults. The AAP suggests that you keep the water temperature at 120 degrees Fahrenheit while your child is young.

Aspirin and other relatively safe drugs should always be kept out of reach for youngsters. It's a good idea to put a latch on the medicine cabinet as well. Keep razors and scissors locked up. Remember, too, that polish removers, hairspray, and colognes can be dangerous when they fall into the wrong hands.

It's perfectly normal for all children to get scrapes, scratches and bruises at one time or another, they are a part of everyone's childhood. But by taking these precautions, you can rest easier knowing that your child is safe in his or her home.



Few blame themselves until they have exhausted all other possibilities.

—Anonymous

It requires a very unusual mind to undertake the analysis of the obvious.

—Alfred North Whitehead

## SEAT BELTS COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE (THEY DID MINE!)

Becky Dixon

I remember that day like it was yesterday. It was April 4, 1985, and I had just gotten my driver's license. Like all 16-year-olds, I thought that I was immortal, so I wheeled the car out of my parents' to take it for a spin. Since my parents had made me take driver's education before I could get my license, the idea of wearing a seat belt was ingrained into my brain. Little did I know how lucky that was for me. On that afternoon of April 4, I was paying more attention to my friends who were in the car rather than the road. I ran a stop sign and was hit from the side by an oncoming truck that was traveling too fast for the residential area that we were in. I remember thinking that I was going to die, but luckily I didn't. The police officer at the scene informed me that I was lucky to be alive after such a wreck. Only my seat belt saved my life—nothing else. To this day, I always wear one when I am

in a car regardless of who is driving. From personal experience, I know that they save lives, and I have realized how valuable life is.

Unfortunately, not everyone feels as I do. Of the 631 traffic deaths in Oregon last year, 85% of the people were not wearing their seat belts. A person riding in a vehicle is 2 times more likely to be seriously injured or die in a wreck as those who wear seat belts. Of adolescent drivers, 70% do not wear seat belts even though there is a law mandating the use of them for this age group. What people don't understand is that on an average Saturday night, 1 out of every 10 drivers that are encountered on the road is drunk. So even though most people don't think that they will be in an automobile wreck, that doesn't mean that the person that they meet on the street and highways thinks the same thing. Drunk driving deaths are the major cause of death

in adolescents in America today. Most traffic deaths occur within 10 miles of the person's home, and could have been prevented if seat belts had been worn. These statistics are staggering. Even more surprising are the number of reported traffic deaths as a result of not wearing a seat belt. Each year, thousands of Americans die in traffic related deaths. Most of the traffic deaths in the U.S. could be prevented by wearing a seat belt.

There is good news though. The number of traffic deaths in Oregon declined from 676 in 1988 to 631 in 1989. The Department of Motor Vehicles reports that over 45% of all drivers do wear seat belts when they are driving, but they also agree that more needs to be done to stop the needless loss of life due to not wearing seat belts. Let's all do our part, and buckle up to save our lives!



## DRINKING & DRIVING

### Bug Off!

## Ticks, Mites and Hikers--

Fear of Lyme disease and squeamishness about "bugs" has left many hikers shuddering before heading off into the hills. Lyme disease is becoming more widespread and if left untreated, may result in pain in the knees and other joints and can even result in chronic arthritis. But the risk of the infection and other parasitic borne infections can be minimized and the disease is curable at every stage. Early treatment is important, especially for Lyme disease since the risk of joint degeneration is possible and irreversible.

Lyme disease is caused by corkscrew-shaped bacteria transmitted through the bite of the pinhead sized deer tick. In the larval stage, deer ticks feed primarily on white-footed mice. The nymph (an immature tick) and adult tick most frequently feed on white-tailed deer. However, both nymphs and adults also attach themselves to birds, dogs, and people. The ticks wait on low vegetation in wooded areas and transfer themselves to whatever brushes by. You're most likely to pick up a tick in underbrush.

Lyme disease has occurred in at least 33 states, most frequently along the Eastern seaboard from Boston to Washington D.C., across the upper Midwest in Minnesota and Wisconsin and along the Pacific coast from just north of San Francisco into Washington. The ticks are most active from early May through July.

Ticks can bite you without your knowing it. An adult tick can drop off after becoming engorged with blood, before you've seen it. A bite of an immature tick is painless and may not leave a trace. An attached deer tick, before it becomes engorged with blood, looks like a tiny fleck of caked dirt or a small skin mole. The round, flat, eight-legged adult is less than one-tenth of an inch long; the nymph half this size. The male is black and the female is dark red and black. When filled with blood the ticks become gray and triple in size.

If a tick has bitten you which is infected with the Lyme disease carrying bacteria, a small bump will appear within 30 days and will be surrounded by a spreading red rash. Like the original rash, the rash often goes unnoticed. Stiff neck, muscle aches, and low fever sometimes accompany this stage. About one-third of all infected people have no symptoms at all. The early symptoms usually disappear but can be followed a few months later by knee soreness, severe headaches, heart arrhythmia, shortness of breath and even partial facial paralysis. These symptoms also disappear within a few days to a few weeks, but can be the forerunners of chronic Lyme arthritis, which can surface up to two years after infection. If you discover a tick attached to you, always consult a physician and if possible, extract the tick using a tissue or tweezers and put it in a container containing a few drops of alcohol for your physician to identify.

Chigger mites are another annoying and tenaciously hungry woodland parasite. Once April hits the Northwest, the mite larvae, newly hatched in soil, climb the nearest plant and wait for a meal. Instead of the usual bird, dog, or small animal, you may be the meal. If you brush by a mite, the mite drops off the plant and attaches to you with a pair of jawlike claws. Unlike the tick, the chigger doesn't burrow. It feeds off the skin by secreting enzymes which liquefy epidermal cells. These enzymes may provoke an allergic reaction which leads to intense itching and possible infection from scratching. Starch baths and calamine lotion help relieve this itching.

To avoid the risk of ticks and chigger mites, always head into the underbrush with a well-stocked first-aid kit including tweezers, insect repellent and calamine lotion. Wear a long-sleeved light-colored shirt to ward off heat and protect the arms and shoulders. This also makes a tick or mite visible on your clothing. Wear long pants in underbrush and tuck your shirt into your pants and your pants into your socks or boots. When emerging from the wild, check yourself thoroughly and have a friend screen your back and scalp. May sound crazy but an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!



## Bits and Pieces...

◀ Roads are most slippery during the first half hour of a rainstorm because oils tend to remain on street surfaces, so drive and cycle with care. Remember, too, that steel bridges, sewer grates, and manhole covers can be as slippery as ice when wet!

◀ Gasoline stored as far as 10 feet from an open flame or spark can explode because of escaping fumes. So store gasoline—as well as kerosene, solvents, and other products that give off vapors—in tightly closed containers far from gas water heaters, furnaces, ranges or any open flame.

◀ Glass windows block most the rays that cause sunburn, but not the radiation that can hurt eyes. Thus, you should wear sunglasses while driving.

◀ The most dangerous time to drive is at 2:00 a.m. Sunday morning, according to the National Safety Council.

◀ Smokers arrive at old age with 20-30% less bone mass than nonsmokers. This results in a more fragile skeleton and a greater risk of fractures.

◀ Wearing a bike helmet is the single most important safety factor in cycling. Yet less than 2% of all schoolchildren wear helmets while cycling.

## Twas a dangerous cliff,

as they freely confessed,  
though to walk near its crest was so pleasant;  
But over its terrible edge there had slipped  
A duke, and a full many peasant.  
The people said something would have to be done,  
But their projects did not at all tally.  
Some said, "Put a fence 'round the edge of the cliff,"  
Some, "An ambulance down in the valley."

The lament of the crowd was profound and was loud,  
As their hearts overflowed with their pity;  
But the cry for the ambulance carried the day.  
As it spread through the neighboring city,  
A collection was made, to accumulate aid,  
and the dwellers in highway and alley,  
gave dollars or cents—not to furnish a fence—  
but an ambulance down in the valley.

"For the cliff is all right if you're careful," they said,  
"And if folks ever slip and are dropping,  
It isn't the slipping that hurts them so much  
As the shock down below—when they're stopping!"  
So for years (we have heard), as these mishaps occurred  
Quick forth would the rescuers sally,  
To pick up the victims who fell from the cliff  
With the ambulance down in the valley.

Said one, to his plea, "It's a marvel to me  
that you'd give so much greater attention,  
to repairing results than to curing the cause;  
you had much better aim at prevention.  
For the mischief of course, should be stopped at its source,  
come neighbors and friends, let us rally.  
It is far better sense to rely on a fence  
than an ambulance down in the valley."

"He is wrong in his head," the majority said;  
"He would end all our earnest endeavor.  
He's a man who would shirk this responsible work,  
but we will support it forever.  
Aren't we picking up all, just as fast as they fall,  
and giving them care liberally?  
A superfluous fence is of no consequence,  
if the ambulance works in the valley."

The story looks queer as we've written it here,  
but things oft occur that are stranger.  
More humane, we assert, than to succor the hurt,  
is the plan of removing the danger.  
The best possible course is to safeguard the source;  
attend to things rationally.  
Yes, build up the fence and let us dispense  
with the ambulance down in the valley.

—Author Unknown

## Drinking and Swimming Don't Mix

Michael Dean Hutley

As summer approaches and the weather begins to heat up, we seek to discover different methods of "cooling off." Heading down to a local river with friends to float down the rapids or swinging from a rope on a tree into the coolness of a mountain lake are ways in which we take advantage of the seasonal Oregon sunshine. In order to enrich the festivities we often times involve the consumption of various forms of alcohol in excessive quantities. To combine these two types of activity, however is a dangerous and life-threatening folly best not undertaken.

More than 150,000 persons of all ages drown each year throughout the world. In the United States, about 7000 to 8000 lives are lost due to drowning, or about 3 per 100,000. About 60% of all drownings occur in the classification of accidental falls into the water from docks, decks of pools, bridges, or shores, or recreational boating and fishing accidents. It has been estimated that perhaps 25% of all fatal submersions throughout the world in persons ages 15 or older involve prior consumption of alcohol.

In a study conducted by Vernon D. Plueckhahn on 131 male drowning victims from 1957 to 1980, 35% of the bodies contained at least a 0.8% blood alcohol level. Causes of drownings ranged from falling off of jetties to passing out face down in a mud puddle.

Why does alcohol play such an important role in the deaths of many drowning victims? The most important physiological action of alcohol in the body is most likely the depressant effect on the central nervous system. This may cause a drop in awareness or coordination, and it may also lower inhibitions, producing feelings of bravery and indestructibility. This is when accidents can happen, and acting properly in a crisis situation becomes more difficult when the mind and body are intoxicated.

A good approach to avoid endangering yourself and others might be the same one taken to drinking and driving. If you know you are going to be around the water, don't drink enough to impair your ability to think, decide, react, and move about freely. And if you have had too much already, stay away from the water.

Having fun is an important part of summer vacation, and in our lovely state we are afforded various lakes, rivers, pools, and an ocean in which to delve in recreational activities. Being safe is part of that fun, and by consciously making decisions in regard to alcohol and our behavior we may enjoy the weather that much more.

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