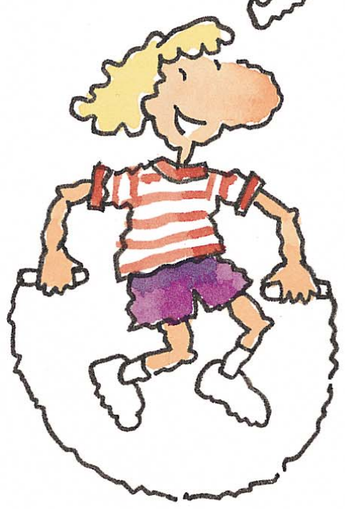
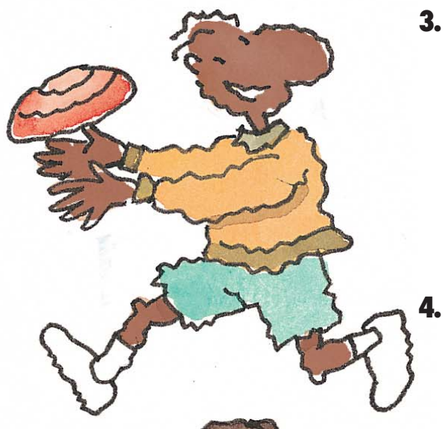
Healthy Kids

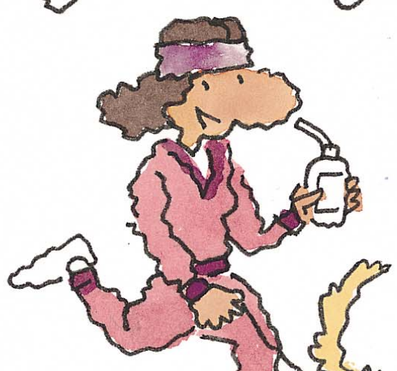
You think the big risks for children are:
KIDNAPPINGS • DRIVE-BY-SHOOTINGS • DRUGS

The *real* risks are:
MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS • DROWNINGS
BICYCLE ACCIDENTS • HOME FIRES

8 WAYS TO KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE







1. Be sure your child wears a bike helmet at all times — even for short jaunts around the block. The majority of bike accidents happen right in the neighborhood. (Kids should wear helmets *anytime* they're on wheels.)

Helmets reduce the risk of head injury by 85% and the risk of brain injury by almost 90% — yet only 5% of all child bicyclists wear bike helmets.

Source: National Safe Kids Campaign

2. If you put your child in a grocery cart, don't turn your back on it.

About 25,000 American kids are hurt every year when they fall or jump out of grocery carts. About 8% of those injuries are serious.

Source: Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, Vol. 149, No. 11

3. Baby walkers should not be considered "baby sitters," says the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Thousands of baby-walker injuries are treated in U.S. hospitals in a year, most of them caused by falls down stairs.

If you put a baby in a walker, make certain all stairs and exits are adequately blocked, and that the walker cannot get close to a range, space heater, or fireplace.

4. Each year 37,000 children under age 14 are treated for hot liquid/food and tap water scaldings. Almost half of them are under age five.

Deaths are more common and injuries more severe from bathtub scalds than hot food/liquids. It only takes three seconds for a child to sustain a third-degree burn from tap water that's 140°F.

Prevention: Turn down hot water heaters to 120°F. Don't let pot handles stick out from the range, within easy reach.

Another possible burn danger: children reaching over their heads to retrieve hot food from a microwave oven.

5. Playing with matches and lighters is the leading cause of fire deaths and injuries for children under age four.

Burns kill more than 1,300 children under age 14 every year, and most of those happen at home.

Smoke detectors cut in half the chances of dying in a residential fire. Be sure yours works.

6. Drowning is the third-leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths to children 14 years old and under. It can happen in as little as one inch of water.

At home, children are at risk from swimming pools, hot tubs, bathtubs, buckets, and toilets.

Never leave a child unattended in or near water.

7. Balloons, balls, marbles, and small toys are the non-food items most often to blame for choking deaths in kids.

Although two-thirds of children who choke and die are younger than three, most of the balloon-choking deaths occur in children older than three.

Source: Journal of the American Medical Association, Vol. 274, No. 22

8. Firearm-related deaths — unintentional shootings, homicides, and suicides — account for 27% of *all* injury deaths among children and teenagers.

If you have firearms at home, are they securely locked (trigger locks), locked away, or out of reach? Also, lock up firearms and ammunition in separate places.

Source: Johns Hopkins Center for Injury Research and Policy

Sleep

Getting too little sleep can make kids and teens cranky, irritable, and "rebellious" — and can result in falling grades and other serious problems.

As a general rule, if your child needs an alarm clock to wake up in the morning, he or she is not going to bed early enough.

Preteens and teens need about nine hours of sleep a night (teens need more than preteens, on average). Getting too little sleep on weekdays — and sleeping more on weekends — is unhealthy because it disrupts the body's natural rhythms, which causes stress.

Source: National Sleep Foundation

"One of the hardest jobs for a parent is making a child realize that 'no' is a complete sentence."

POISON CONTROL

If you think your child has swallowed poison:

STAY CALM, ACT QUICKLY

Signs your child might have swallowed poison include:

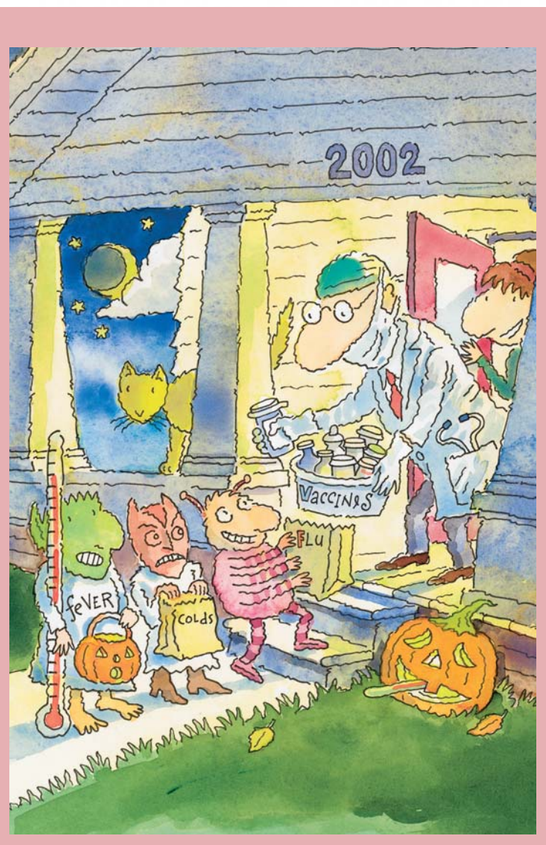
- **Unexplained stains** on his or her clothing
- **Burns** on his or her lips or mouth
- **Odd odors** on his or her breath, or unusual drooling
- **Unexplained, sudden nausea** or vomiting
- **Abdominal cramps** without fever
- **Sudden behavior changes,** unusual sleepiness, irritability, or jumpiness
- **Convulsions or unconsciousness** (only in very serious cases)

Here's what to do:

- **Check for severe throat pain,** drooling, breathing difficulty, convulsions, or excessive drowsiness.

  If *any* of these symptoms are occurring, get immediate emergency help. Call 911.
- **Take away — but save — empty containers** for later identification.
- **Do not induce vomiting without advice.** It can cause more harm than good. But keep ipecac or activated charcoal on hand.
- **If there are no symptoms** that require immediate medical intervention, call the Poison Control Center. They'll want to know your child's age, weight, what and how much was swallowed, and when he or she swallowed it.

Source: The American Academy of Pediatrics



How to treat the symptoms of a cold or the flu

- **To relieve headache, muscle ache, and to reduce fever, use *acetaminophen* (e.g., children's Tylenol).** Don't give aspirin to children because of its association with Reye's syndrome (a serious illness affecting children between three and 12 years of age that can lead to permanent brain damage or death).
- **Encourage liquids (water, juice, soda), especially if your child is running a fever.** They help mucus remain more liquid, which helps prevent bacterial complications like ear infections or bronchitis.
- **Headaches, coughs, and congestion are often relieved with a vaporizer.** Place a warm washcloth on the forehead and upper cheeks to help relieve sinus congestion.

  Over-the-counter cough syrups should be used only on a doctor's advice. The amounts of decongestants and antihistamines they contain may be safe for adults, but children may suffer drowsiness, irritability, hallucinations, and high blood pressure. Follow directions.

Groundwork for a healthy heart

Now is the time to lay the groundwork for a long life with a healthy heart. Encourage your kids to:

1. **Exercise regularly.** Modest, consistent exercise keeps the heart in top shape. It also keeps cholesterol under better control.
2. **Eat right.** This means plenty of whole-grain foods, legumes (beans), fruits, and vegetables.

   From there, add modest portions of fish and poultry. Limit red meat consumption to three-ounce servings two to three times a week.
3. **Know their blood pressure.** Check it once a year. African-American males need to pay particular attention to high blood pressure, its causes, and the diets that encourage it. Starting to pay attention as a teenager isn't too soon.
4. **Stay away from cigarettes.** Smoking has a major negative impact on the heart and vascular system.

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