The Wellness Family

Dr. Sheehan Keeps You Informed

Living Safely

It seems that before the baby is even mobile, we're childproofing the house. We're putting outlet covers in every open plug, even ones way beyond their reach. There's bumpers on the corners of the coffee table and safety latches on the cupboards. We've got baby gates at the stairs and non-slip adhesive stickers stuck to the bottom of the bathtub. While this is certainly going to help, there's so much more we can do to ensure that our entire family is living safely.

Furniture Safety

A recent study published online in the journal Pediatrics, showed an alarming increase in the rate of children being injured by falling TVs. Since newer TVs are typically flat-panel and placed in the living room; this has led to the older, heavier television sets being relegated to bedrooms and placed on top of dressers. In some cases, the child may use the drawers to climb up to try to access the TV which may topple either the dresser or the television or both.

In just the past 20 years the number of children being injured by falling televisions has doubled and in that same time over 200 children were killed. This is something that can be easily avoided. With regards to flat-panel TVs, if there are young children in the home, they should be mounted on the wall or to a television stand that is designed to support that particular weight and model. Larger, older television sets should be only on low-lying television stands that are wider on both sides than the TV. This allows for more stability.

If you are going to put the TV on top of a dresser, be sure that the dresser is wider than the television to add some stability. Place the TV back against the wall, allowing for space in front of the TV. In this instance, the TV would need to be pulled forward before it can be pulled down. While not an ideal situation, at least safer.

Dressers can also be "child proofed" by installing stops on the drawers to prevent them from being pulled all the way out. If more than one or two drawers are opened all the way, the weight from the drawers can throw off the balance and the dresser can topple over. Safety brackets are also an option, the bracket should be screwed into the wall in a wall-stud and then screwed into either the back or top of the dresser. It will then stop the dresser from going over if the weight becomes unbalanced.

In that same manner, bookshelves should be attached to the wall with safety brackets. Children will climb and having the shelving unit attached to the wall will remove the risk that it may fall over on top of them.

Electrical Safety

It is estimated that at least 7 children each day will be seen in an emergency room due to an electrical related injury. There are several things that can be done to avoid this danger.

First, be sure to following any cords that are in reach of children. Look for any frayed or loose wires, these should be replaced immediately. No cords should be running under carpets or across doorways, this increases the risk of a child tripping and the added risk of the appliance being pulled over by the cord being jerked.

Finally, consider hiring an electrician to add more outlets before using extension cords, this will avoid a potential two-fold threat: the risk of the child tripping over the cord and the possibility of overloading an outlet.

It's important to think outside the box when it comes to home safety.

Plumbing Safety

We don't typically think about "hot" water coming out of the faucet until something happens and a child is seriously burned or scalded. This can be easily avoided by having a plumber install an anti-scald device for the faucets and showerhead. This can regulate the water temperature and avoid burns.

Additionally, most hot water heaters have a temperature regulator built in that should be set at no higher than 120 degrees.

Kitchen Safety

It's probably best to discourage little-ones from being in the kitchen at all but sometimes that's just not realistic, therefore, to keep them safe it's important to consider the following safety measures.

- Install a safety cover on the garbage disposal to protect little hands
- Be sure that all small appliances are unplugged when not in use
- Garbage cans should be stored in a cabinet with a latch to avoid children ingesting something dangerous or even poisonous

For children that are a little older, it's important to educate them about what to do if something should happen in the kitchen. For instance, keep a box of baking soda near the stove and make sure that the child knows where to find it and how to use it to put out a fire. A lid can also be kept nearby to place over a skillet and smother a grease fire.

Additionally, it's not unusual to have a fire extinguisher in the kitchen, but it will be less than useless if no one knows how to use it. Make sure to review the instructions with anyone in the home that will be cooking or baking in the kitchen.

Fire Safety

While most fires do start in the kitchen, it's still wise to have fire extinguishers placed strategically throughout the house. For multi-story homes, be sure to place an extinguisher on each floor.

Create an escape plan with at least two routes in case of a fire and practice at least twice a year. It would be beneficial to practice this plan at least once after dark. Be sure that every member of the family knows where to go, what to do and how to do it. Visit the National Fire Protection Association's website at nfpa.org for suggestions.

First Aid

No matter how careful you are to keep your family safe, there's always a possibility that someone may get injured. So be sure to have on hand the best remedies for each situation.

Every home should have an Aloe Vera plant. This is not only the number one comfort for sunburns or any other type of burn, for that matter, but it's also a powerful anti-inflammatory, a natural analgesic and able to speed up cell growth due to the large number of nutrients, vitamins, amino acids and fatty acids it contains.

Arnica is a natural cream or oral remedy for pain. Applied to the skin directly it can soothe aching muscles, help reduce inflammation and even heal wounds. Although commonly used for sprains and bruises, it can also be taken orally in diluted doses as an herbal pain reliever.

Another valuable first aid recommendation is the acronym RICE (rest, ice, compression and elevation) for sprains, strains and bruises.

- Rest – always rest after an injury and avoid all activity that will cause pain
- Ice – apply an ice pack to the injured area for 20 minutes every 2 to 3 hours
- Compression – for visible swelling, elastic bandages work well, but avoid bandages that are too tight
- Elevation – the injured area should be elevated above heart level using a pillow or chair

The Chiropractic Factor

Just as your Family Wellness Chiropractic wants your family to be healthy, they also want them to be safe. It's important to think outside the box when it comes to home safety. There's more to keeping your children and entire family safe than just the standard fallbacks for child-proofing. Think beyond the usual and look for anything you can do in your home to ensure your entire family is safe.

Dear Patient,
Dr. Sheehan is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.

This newsletter is provided to you by:

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