



In Home Location Fact Sheets

Lounge

A place to relax, to watch TV, to listen to some music, to put your feet up - so what possible dangers could there be waiting for a young child amongst all the house plants and soft furnishings? A lot more than you might think...

- Never leave a baby lying on a couch or armchair as they can easily roll off.
- Place suitably sturdy guards in front of all fires, heaters and radiators.
- To avoid the risk of fire, never leave clothes drying too near a heater or open fire.
- If you have glass doors or floor level windows, make sure these are fitted with safety glass or covered in a protective film to prevent shattering. This also applies to glass topped or glass fronted furniture.
- Move sharp or breakable ornaments out of your child's reach.
- Clear away toys after play to avoid tripping and falling.
- Remove loose or curled up rugs as these can be a trip hazard.
- Falls into coffee tables are a common cause of child injuries. Move coffee tables and other low lying furniture out of the lounge until your toddler can balance well on two feet.
- Fit corner cushion pads on sharp edged furniture such as coffee tables or TV stands.
- Secure unstable or top-heavy furniture such as bookcases or sideboards - preferably by fastening them to the wall - to prevent them toppling over on to your child.
- Children love to climb, so move furniture away from your lounge windows. Keep the windows closed when children are about, or fit safety latches that prevent the windows opening wide enough for a child to fall through.
- Blind cords can easily get twisted around a child's neck, cords should not be cut, parents should tie up the cords out or reach and use cleats where possible. Please look for the BS EN 13120:2009 standard mark.

- Never leave a child alone on a balcony. To be on the safe side, remove all balcony furniture that your child could move and climb on.
- If you have a balcony with railings, check that these are no more than 10cm (4ins) apart. If the gaps between the railings are any greater than this, board them up.
- Never leave an electric fire plugged into the mains when not in use as the bars still carry enough voltage to kill a young child.
- TV's and PCs – Make sure heavy appliances such as PCs and television sets are secure and stable with all dangling cables hidden well out of sight. Remember that the most common television-related accident involving under-fives is being struck by a falling TV set. Large wall-mounted Plasma TVs are particularly dangerous if not fitted correctly – so make sure the wall is strong enough to support it and play safe by having it professionally installed (many retailers selling these sets now offer this fitting service at no extra cost).
- DVD players – Put your DVD player on a high shelf out of reach or turn them off at the mains when not in use.
- Never leave a mobile phone charger plugged into the mains. The tip of the charger can cause severe electrical burns if it ends up in a child's mouth.
- Check that there are no dangling flexes from table lamps or trailing wires from other electrical equipment for your child to pull on.

IMPORTANT NOTE: You can't see it, hear it, smell it or taste it yet carbon monoxide poisoning due to poorly maintained heating systems accounts for over 20 deaths and around 200 serious incidents every year. So fit a carbon monoxide detector and make sure your heating system is professionally serviced at least once a year.

Never smoke near your baby. Second hand smoke can have a serious effect on vulnerable young children, causing breathing difficulties which may also increase the risk of cot death. Always take your smoking break outside if you can, but bear in mind that the fumes from stale smoke on clothes can be just as harmful. So if you've always wanted to give up smoking, what better time to quit than now? Your local GP surgery may run stop smoking clinics, but you might prefer to make a start by visiting smokefree.nhs.uk or by calling the free helpline on **0800 84 84 84**.