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CONTACT

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*Southeastern District  
Health Department*

*1901 Alvin Ricken Drive  
Pocatello, ID 83201*

*(208) 478-6315  
(208) 234-7169 fax  
cnelson@phd6.idaho.gov  
www.safekids.org  
www.sdhdidaho.org*

Mary Howell  
Public Information Officer  
Office: 208-239-5288  
Cell: 208-243-1086

## **1,800 Children Per Year Fatally Injured at Home** **Safe Kids Southeastern Idaho urges parents to childproof homes**

**Pocatello** - Each year in the United States, more than 1,800 children ages 4 and under die from accidental injuries in the home, and more than 3 million children ages 14 and under are treated in emergency rooms for accidental injuries occurring at home. Most fatal injuries at home are caused by suffocation, fire and burns, drowning, choking, falls, poisoning or firearms discharged unintentionally.

Safe Kids Southeastern Idaho urges parents and caregivers to check their homes at least once a year for basic safety precautions. "Make it your New Year's resolution," says Cherie Nelson Safe Kids Southeastern Idaho coordinator. "It's easy to eliminate the most obvious hazards — and you don't need a lot of expensive equipment."

The first step in childproofing a home is to explore every room at a child's eye level. "Literally get down on your hands and knees and crawl around. You'll be surprised at how much you can reach and how many small objects you can pick up," says Nelson. "Anything that can fit through a toilet paper tube is a potential choking hazard. Of course, cleaning products, alcohol, firearms, matches, lighters and other potentially harmful products need to be stored out of reach and locked up."

Safe Kids Southeastern Idaho also recommends these precautions:

- **Set your water heater no higher than 120 degrees F.** At higher temperatures, it only takes three seconds to burn a child's skin severely enough to require surgery.
- **Memorize this phone number: 800-222-1222.** From anywhere in the United States, this toll-free number will connect you to the local Poison Control Center. Call this hotline if a child has ingested any substance that isn't food — but if a child is choking or having trouble breathing, call 911.
- **Test your smoke alarms every month.** Make sure you have working smoke alarms in every sleeping area. Also check for fire

hazards such as frayed electrical wires or flammable materials near heating appliances.

- **Install carbon monoxide detectors in every sleeping area and near fuel-burning appliances.** This invisible, odorless gas can be fatal.
- **Put safety gates at the top and bottom of every stairway.** Gates installed with hardware are safer than pressure gates.
- **Cover unused electrical outlets.** You can buy plastic outlet covers or just use duct tape.
- **Keep firearms unloaded and locked out of reach.** And lock up ammunition in a separate place.
- **Post emergency numbers by every phone.** In addition to the numbers for fire and emergency medical services, keep numbers for the pediatrician and a neighbor handy.
- **Check your first aid kit to make sure it is fully stocked.** Make sure babysitters know where to find first aid supplies and how to handle an emergency.

For more information about kitchen safety, window blinds, cribs, windows, furniture and other hazards around the home, call Safe Kids Southeastern Idaho at 208-478-6315 or visit [www.usa.safekids.org](http://www.usa.safekids.org).

“Safety comes first, even if it means making your home a little less convenient for adults,” says Nelson “Safety gates and cabinet locks are a small price to pay to keep a child out of the emergency room.”

Safe Kids Southeastern Idaho works to prevent accidental childhood injury, the leading killer of children 14 and under. Safe Kids Southeastern Idaho is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing accidental injury.

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