Handle safely

Babies can easily wriggle into danger.
Don't let it happen to yours.
Almost every week a baby will die as the result of an accident. Most injuries to babies and small children happen in and around the home. Make sure your baby doesn't become a statistic by setting up a safety action zone.

Look around your home and garden and take action now to minimise potential hazards.

**Falls**

**Remember** Babies under 9 months have limited mobility but they can wriggle, kick or roll into hazardous situations. For example, within a few months a baby can roll him or herself off a bed, work surface or changing table.

**Action** Don't leave a baby unattended on any raised surface, even strapped in a car seat on a kitchen surface.

**Remember** Falls and trips are the most frequent cause of injuries amongst young children.

**Action** Once a baby is crawling, make sure there is no furniture around that he or she can climb on, especially directly under a window. Fit safety gates at the top and bottom of the stairs and fit window locks or safety catches that stop windows opening more than 10cm/4in.

**Burns and Scalds**

**Remember** A baby's skin is delicate and injuries caused by burns and scalds can be horrific.

**Action** Always put cold water into the bath before hot. Test the temperature with your elbow and, if necessary, turn the hot water thermostat to below 54°C (130°F). Never leave your baby alone in the bath, even if an older brother or sister is with him or her, they may turn on the hot tap. In the kitchen, remember to keep hot drinks, food, kettles and pan handles out of reach. In particular, always think carefully about where you place hot food and drink.

**Remember** Babies reach out for attractive bright colours.

**Action** Use an appropriate fire guard for all fires whether they are solid fuel, electric or gas.

**Remember** In the event of a fire, extra seconds can make the difference between life and death.

**Action** Fit a smoke alarm on each floor in your home. If you've already got one, check that it's working properly on a weekly basis. Be prepared - work out a fire escape plan.

**Choking**

**Remember** Babies beginning to sit and crawl reach out for objects and often grab anything they can get their hands on to put into their mouths.

**Action** Keep objects like coins and small toys out of a baby's reach so that they don't end up in their mouth.

**Remember** Babies choke very easily, even on drinks.

**Action** Don't leave a baby alone with a feeding bottle.

**Strangulation**

**Remember** Babies wriggle a lot so they can easily get themselves caught up in things from which they can't free themselves.

**Action** Avoid clothing with dangling draw strings, ribbons or braces. Also avoid toys with long strings.

**Poisoning**

**Remember** From the age of about 6-8 months babies put things in their mouths.

**Action** Make sure medicine containers and cleaning products are properly closed and kept out of sight and reach.

**Drowning**

**Remember** Babies can drown in a few centimetres of water.

**Action** Stay with your baby all the time when he or she is in the bath.
**out and about**

**REMEMBER** Travelling by car can be dangerous. Minimise the risks by taking the correct steps.

**ACTION** Use a rear facing baby seat on every journey, however short. *Never use a rear facing baby seat in the front passenger seat if an air bag is fitted.* When the baby is old enough, he or she will need a toddler seat.

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**safe in the sun**

**REMEMBER** A baby's skin is very sensitive and burns easily.

**ACTION** Babies under 6 months should be kept out of the sun altogether. Once over 6 months, keep babies out of the sun between 11am and 3pm. Dress them in loose clothing and a hat that covers the back of the neck. Use a sun cream and check with your health visitor if you need advice on the type of sun cream that is suitable for your baby.

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Although you may take active steps to ensure that your baby is safe from accidental injury there may be an occasion when an injury does occur. CAPT advises that you keep emergency numbers by the telephone, learn some basic first aid and keep a first aid kit handy.

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Further information or assistance can be obtained by contacting the following people in your local area.

**HEALTH VISITOR**
advice on health and child safety.

**FIRE OFFICER**
advice on fire prevention.

**ROAD SAFETY OFFICER**
advice on road safety.

**HOME SAFETY OR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER**
advice on home safety.

Please contact CAPT at the following address if you need further information or advice about children's safety:

**Child Accident Prevention Trust**
18-20 Farringdon Lane
London EC1R 3HA
telephone 0171 608 3828

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This leaflet is one of a set of five each covering a different age and stage of a child's development:

**Handle safely:** babies from birth to crawling

**Active steps to safety:** toddlers up to the age of 5

**Step safely with a helping hand:** children aged 5-7

**Step safely from the edge:** children aged 7-11

**It's a safety thing:** young people aged 11-14