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YOUR CHILD IS ON THE MOVE: REDUCE THE RISK OF GUN INJURY

PROTECTING YOUR CHILD FROM GUN INJURY

- A home is safer without a handgun.
- In homes with guns, children are safest if:
 - Guns are stored unloaded and locked up or with a trigger lock; and
 - Bullets are stored and locked in another place.
- Even if you do not own a gun, you need to make sure that the homes your child visits are safe too.

Children love to explore. As they learn new skills, like crawling, walking, climbing, or running, there are more ways of getting into trouble! Much of this trouble will be small. But, if there is a gun in the house, a child's curiosity can lead to severe injury or death.

FACT: Nearly 40% of the homes with children in the United States have a gun.

FACT: Children as young as 3 years may be strong enough to pull the trigger on a handgun.

FACT: Every other day, on average, an American child under age 10 is killed or disabled with a gun.

**When it comes to guns, parents
can't be too careful!**

PARENTS NEED TO ASK Asking Saves Kids

Even if you do not own a gun, ask your neighbors, friends, and family if they do before your child visits their homes.

- If they don't, that's one less thing you have to worry about.
- If they do, keep your child away from homes where there are guns or where guns are not stored safely.

Sometimes it can be hard for a parent to ask about guns. One mother asks this way, "My child is very curious. Do you have guns or anything dangerous that he might get into?"

Some people may not agree with you, but it's important that you talk with them about your concerns. Here are some tips to make asking about guns easier:

- Bring up the topic when you are talking about other health and safety issues such as car seats, seat belts, pets, or allergies.
- Share facts about gun safety. You are not judging people, you just want to make sure your child is safe.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

"With so much violence, isn't it safer for me to have a handgun in my home to protect my family?"

No. In homes with handguns, it is much more likely that the handgun will be used to shoot a family member or friend than in self-defense.

Every year, thousands of Americans are seriously injured or killed when:

- A child finds a gun or is showing a friend the gun kept at home and, without meaning to, pulls the trigger.
- A depressed teenager or adult becomes suicidal.
- An argument between family members gets out of control.
- A friend or family member is mistaken for an intruder.



“Can’t I just hide my gun and teach my child not to touch it?”

No. Children need better protection from guns.

- Exploring and playing are the ways children learn about the world.
- Any child’s curiosity and urge to discover new things can overcome a parent’s warnings. Young children simply do not understand how dangerous guns can be.
- Young children are not able to tell the difference between toy guns and real guns.
- Many TV shootings do not look dangerous or deadly.
- The only safe way to hide a gun is to lock it up.

**In one mother’s words:
“My brothers admitted as adults that,
as children, they would go
in my dad’s room
and take out the gun and play with it.”
This family was lucky,
but many others are not.**

Connected Kids are Safe, Strong, and Secure

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

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