

## Childproof the Bathroom

Like the kitchen, the bathroom can be one of the more hazardous rooms in your home for your baby. The following tips will help keep your baby safe and out of mischief:

- Make sure your baby doesn't find his way into the bathroom unsupervised by installing a hook-and-eye lock high on the outside of the door or by placing a childproof cover over the doorknob.
- Remember to keep the toilet lid down, and install a toilet lock to prevent your baby from lifting the lid. Small children are curious, uncoordinated, and extremely top-heavy. If your baby leans over to peer into the toilet bowl, he could easily lose his balance, fall in headfirst, and drown in as little as an inch of water.
- Put razors, scissors, nail clippers, tweezers, and other sharp utensils in a locked cabinet or high up in a linen closet well out of your baby's reach.
- Unplug your blow-dryer, curling iron, and any other appliances that create heat, and put them away after each use to prevent burns.
- Keep all cosmetics and medications — including prescription drugs, antacids, aspirin, and mouthwash (which contains more alcohol than wine does) — in a high cabinet secured with a child-safety lock. Even medications that have safety caps, which are only child-resistant and not childproof, need to be placed out of reach.
- Treat all vitamins and other supplements with the same caution you'd use with medications, storing them in a high locked cabinet. Iron pills and multivitamins containing iron are poisonous to young children. Minerals, herbal remedies, and other supplements are hazardous, too.
- Don't keep anything plugged in near the sink or bathtub. Water conducts electricity, so if a hair dryer fell into the tub while you were giving your baby a bath, it could electrocute you both. To be extra safe, make sure all electrical outlets near the sink or tub are protected by a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI), an inexpensive device that senses a change in the current and quickly stops the flow of electricity. GFCIs are standard in most new homes to comply with construction codes, but if you have an older home, an electrician may need to replace the bathroom outlets.
- Set your hot water heater no higher than 120 degrees Fahrenheit (49 degrees Celsius). A lower water temperature helps ensure safe bathing by reducing the chance of scalding (it takes just three seconds for a child to get a serious burn). You can also install an anti-scalding device on your faucets.
- Place a nonslip rubber mat in the bathtub and a nonslip bath mat on the floor next to the tub to prevent falls.
- Put a soft plastic or rubber guard over the tub spout to protect your baby from accidentally bumping his head.
- Never leave your baby alone in the bathtub, not even for a moment. If the doorbell rings, scoop him up in a towel and take him with you. Bring your cell phone or a cordless phone into the bathroom if you feel you can't miss a call.
- Teach your baby to stay seated in the tub at all times. If he's the active type, you may have to repeat this message many times before it sticks, but his safety makes the effort worth it.