

Kid safe living

Roads and vehicles are an everyday part of life for all of us. Either as a driver, a passenger, or as a pedestrian, we all must negotiate the road traffic environment on a daily basis.

Children are especially vulnerable around vehicles and roads due to their size and capabilities.

Be aware of the opportunities for children to become safer road-users. Walk down to the local shop for milk or the newspaper with your children on Sunday morning. Park the car and walk around to the sports ground, on the way explaining the observations and choices you make to get there safely. Talk about the importance of wearing seat belts and insist that everyone in the vehicle wears appropriate restraints. Point out rules of the road when driving. Always demonstrate responsible and safe behaviours when driving, or when a passenger and while walking anywhere around vehicles and roads.

Along with the benefits of road use, there are also challenges that we need to be aware of. Some safety issues dealing with road and vehicles include the following:

Pedestrian Safety

Children need assistance dealing with the traffic environment until the age of 10. Prior to this, they are not equipped physically or developmentally to make the crucial decisions to keep them safe. It is important children are supervised and accompanied by a parent or adult carer. Like learning to drive a car, children need to practice and experience to walk in the traffic environment.

Alongside the benefits of learning road safety, it is great chance to spend time with your family and good exercise!!

Passenger Safety

It is important to properly equip your car with appropriate child restraints for your child to keep them safe. Every time you make a trip in a vehicle, ensure your child is properly restrained and protected.

Driveway Safety

This is a current area of concern due to the accessibility by small children to driveways and the fact that children are often undetectable prior to such an accident.

Bicycle and Small Wheels Safety

Whenever buying bicycles, skateboards, scooters and rollerblades for you child, always buy the correct

safety gear to go with it - buy the whole present, not just part of it.

Heat Stress In Cars

Remember never to leave your child alone in a vehicle - the temperature within cars can quickly build up and children are at risk of dehydration, which can cause serious injury.

Home Safety

Injury has now replaced disease as the biggest single cause of death to Australian children after their first birthday.

Each week in NSW as a result of unintentional injury: Approximately 1,300 children will be treated in a hospital emergency department, many more children will be treated by General Practitioners, on average 350 children will be hospitalised, and between 1 and 2 children will, unfortunately, die.

60% of these preventable incidents occur in the home.

A home represents different things to different people. Wealth, success, family, security or a place to hang your hat, the home is a large part of our lives. We invest large amounts of our finance, time and future in designing and maintaining our homes. Most couples seek the dream of owning their home before starting a family. So why are homes designed for adults?

- Do hidden dangers lurk in your home?
- Do you know how to look at your child's environment to see what potential dangers may be in your home?
- Do you know how to identify them?
- Would you know what child safe choices are available for different hazards?
- Would you know how to identify which product design is recommended as the safer option to use to prevent a potential child related incident?

You are invited to explore the following pages, which have been designed to enable you to make informed choices about your child's safety in the home, within an array of issues.

The causes for these children's injuries have been linked to various issues including environmental aspects, products design or a combination of these factors with the lack of understanding by the carer or parent on how important child supervision is.

Child supervision is major factor in the prevention of child related injuries and deaths to children in Australia.

Water Safety

Water safety in the home is essential. Be aware of water sources around your home and take action to prevent access by children to these areas.

Royal Life Saving Society Australia statistics showed that half of the children under the age of five who drown, do so in backyard swimming pools or spas. Sadly, on average, one child dies each week in Australia as a result of preventable drowning.

Over a 10 year period from 1995 to 2004, 25 children aged under 5 drowned in bathtubs. It is estimated that for every one of those deaths, 3 to 4 children in the same age range suffered a near drowning experience in a bathtub. Some of these were left with permanent injuries such as brain damage.

Taken from www.kidsafensw.org. September 2006.