



SAFETY STATION

TIPS FOR A CHILD-FRIENDLY HOME YOUR FIREPLACE

www.bcchildrens.ca/safetystation

For more information on baby-proofing your home, visit the Safety Station located in the lobby of BC Children's Hospital, 4480 Oak Street, Vancouver, BC V6H 3V4.

The Safety Station offers a toll-free advisory service on home safety, plus a complete baby-proofing shop with proceeds to Safe Start, the injury prevention program of BC Children's Hospital.

Call 604-875-2244, outside the lower mainland call 1-888-331-8100.



September 2007

On average each year, forty children come to BC Children's Hospital Emergency Department with injuries caused by fireplaces. Most of these children are between one and four years of age.

Does your home have a fireplace? If so, here are some simple ways to make the area around your fireplace safer for young children...



THE HEARTH

The hearth is the part of your fireplace that is most likely to cause an injury. Usually made of brick, stone or marble, the hearth is especially dangerous due to its exposed edges and corners, which are extremely sharp. Also, because it is located where children tend to play, the hearth poses a danger even when the fireplace is not being used. Falls onto hearths can cause cuts, concussions, broken teeth and skull fractures.

What can you do?

Cushion the edge of your hearth with soft, fire-resistant material. Items such as pillows, sheets, or rugs can catch alight if placed too close to the fire. Hearth cushions are available in safety stores or on-line for between \$45 and \$80. These cushions are several feet long and made of dense, fire-resistant foam that attaches with adhesive.

Here are some home-made alternatives to store-bought hearth cushions: inner tubing, fire-resistant foam, or pipe insulation covered with electrical tape (pipe insulation by itself can be a choking hazard).



GAS FIREPLACES

Most fireplace burns happen when children touch or fall against hot glass. Fireplace glass can reach a temperature of 200°C (more than 390°F). This is hot enough to cause a third-degree burn on contact.

What can you do?

Keep children away from fireplaces during and for at least 45 minutes after use.



Install a screen or hearth gate. Screens are available in most fireplace stores and online and cost between \$100-200. Hearth gates are a larger and more secure option for gas fireplaces, wood stoves or three-sided fireplaces, and cost between \$250-300.

The safest option is not to use a fireplace when you have young children.

