

THINK SAFETY!

Issue 4
Autumn/Winter
2011-2012



Dear NYC Families,

Welcome to the Autumn/Winter 2011-2012 edition of Think Safety, a newsletter created by Safe Kids New York City. Safe Kids NYC is a coalition of educators, health care professionals, and child advocates that is devoted to helping you keep the children you care about healthy and free from unintentional injuries. Unintentional injuries at home, at play and on the way are a leading cause of death and hospitalization to children, but they are preventable if we are aware of the many safety tools available to us and know how to use them correctly. The informative articles you will read in this newsletter were written by injury prevention and child service experts, including trauma coordinators from major hospitals in NYC, attorneys, and health and safety educators from city and private agencies.

We'll miss the fun of being outdoors in the warmth of spring and summer, but the upcoming holidays and fall and winter activities are wonderful, too. This edition of Think Safety provides important information about how to reduce the incidence of unintentional injuries to your whole family as you walk and play outside, do sports and have fun at home and on the road. It also covers other critical issues such as asthma prevention and child exploitation. We will be back next year with our Spring/Summer edition, with more handy tips for safety to keep in mind as the weather gets warmer.

Enjoy your fall and winter, and think safety!

All the best,


Marjorie Marciano

Marjorie Marciano
Coordinator, Safe Kids NYC



Our Activities

- Workshops for pregnant and new parents help young families learn how to be safe from the start
- Car safety seat inspection stations teach parents to correctly install car seats
- At programs and fairs at schools, after-school centers, camps, libraries and museums, children learn how to prevent injuries at home, at play and on the road

Safe Kids NYC is led by  the NYC Dept. of Transportation.

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Look – and Be Seen

Why Be Seen?

At this time of year, decreased daylight, shadows and earlier nightfall make it difficult for drivers to see pedestrians and bicyclists. Consider these facts about pedestrian crashes in New York City:

- 40% of serious pedestrian crashes occur in the late afternoon/evening hours.
- Late night pedestrian crashes are twice as fatal as crashes at other times.
- Nearly 20% more pedestrian crashes occur in November and December.

Source: New York City Pedestrian Safety Study & Action Plan
<http://home2.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/about/pedsafetyreport.shtml>

Share the road safely to prevent traffic injuries.

Look

- Drivers: Look for pedestrians crossing in crosswalks and mid-block.
- Pedestrians: Look left and right before crossing and keep looking for turning vehicles as you cross.

Be Seen

- During the day, wear bright colors so you will be seen by drivers.
- At night, wear white or light colors so drivers will see you at dusk and after dark. Retro-reflective tape or items attached to your clothing will make you more visible at night.



Halloween Safety for Drivers and for Kids

By Karen Blackburn, Traffic Safety Specialist, AAA-NY

Halloween can be a dangerous time for young pedestrians. It's right up there with New Year's Day and July 4th, when lots of extra people are out and about walking and driving, and may not be thinking about safety. And although Halloween is on a Monday this year, many festivities are expected to take place throughout the weekend, putting a large number of both youth and adult party-goers on the road – and at risk.

AAA OFFERS THESE TIPS TO PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN ON HALLOWEEN:

- Be bright at night; use reflective tape on costumes and treat bags, wear light colors and carry flashlights and glow sticks for extra visibility.
- Don't wear a costume that obstructs vision.
- Wear a costume you can walk in – comfortable footwear and nothing that drags on the ground.
- Look all ways and listen for traffic before crossing streets and driveways.
- Younger children should always be accompanied by an adult or trustworthy teen; older children should be given boundaries and should communicate with their parents along the way.
- **PARTY GOERS AND HOSTS -- MAKE PLANS IN ADVANCE TO REDUCE THE RISK OF BEING INVOLVED IN A CRASH**
- Make plans to get home safely. Use a designated driver or call a cab.
- Party hosts should be sure to take care of designated drivers and offer alternatives to alcohol.
- Plan travel routes carefully. Try to avoid cutting through residential areas that will likely have a large number of trick or treaters.



Managing Pediatric Asthma: It's All About Prevention

Audrey Dupree-Sealey, PhD, FNP, Assistant Director / Trauma Coordinator,
Kings County Hospital Center

What is asthma?

Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disorder of the airways characterized by an obstruction of airflow – in other words, people with asthma feel like “a fish out of water” during an asthma attack. Their lungs do not get enough air for them to breathe.

What is its cost?

The prevalence of asthma, especially in children, is increasing around the world, the nation and in New York City. Annually, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 15 million disability-adjusted life-years are lost and 250,000 asthma deaths are reported worldwide. Approximately 1.8 million people (47.8% are children age 18 and younger) require treatment in the emergency departments each year in the United States. In New York City, the number of children treated in emergency departments is rising annually. The cost of illness related to asthma is around \$6.2 billion. Among children and adolescents aged 5-17 years, asthma accounts for a loss of 10 million school days and costs caretakers \$726.1 million because of work absence.

What causes asthma attacks?

Triggers are everywhere. Any home can be full of triggers such as mold, dust mites second-hand smoke, cockroaches, cats and dogs. Other asthma triggers may be air pollution (such as ozone, small particles, and pollen), foods, respiratory infections and exercise. (www.noattacks.org/triggers.html)

Triggers can bring on an asthma attack and cause trouble breathing, with the following

symptoms: wheezing, coughing, chest pain and chest tightness. Attacks often occur at night (during the early morning hours) or after exercise.

Asthma cannot be cured. But, with the help of your primary care provider (doctors and nurses) and an asthma action plan, it can be controlled, and your child can stay active and healthy. You can find examples of action plans at www.noattacks.org/asthmaaction.html or www.ihacares.com (search for "Asthma plan").

Sports and asthma

Many famous athletes with asthma have successfully competed in sports. Your child can be at the top of his or her game if they take care of themselves, eat right, get plenty of rest, and follow their action plans. Here are some tips to keep them healthy and safe during sports activities:

Prevent attacks

- Dress properly

Wear the proper clothing. When children set out on early mornings, they should wear layers. This will allow them to shed their coats, scarves and sweaters as the day get warmer.

- Stay hydrated

It is just as important to keep hydrated in the fall and winter as it is in the summer. A child can become just as dehydrated on the ski slope or football field on brisk fall and cold winter days as they can during the hot, humid days of summer.

- Set limits

When your child feels tired or short of breath, he or she should always notify the

coach or an adult.

Treatment

- Always speak to your child's doctor before allowing the child to participate in any sports activities.
- Make sure your child has his or her medication with them when they are participating in any sports activity.
- Inform the school nurse or the coach that the child has an inhaler that can be used in case of any emergency.

The child should drink water before, during and after any sports activity to prevent dehydration. Dehydration can cause or worsen an asthma attack.



Sources: www.nyc.gov/html/hhc/html/newsletter1201108-pediatric-asthmashtnl
www.pulmonaryreviews.com
www.medscape.com

Safe Sleep for Infants

By Princess Fortin, MPH
City Research Scientist, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Sleep-related injury is a leading cause of death among New York City children. The 2011 NYC Child Fatality Review Team Report shows that from 2004 to 2008, more than three quarters of injury deaths among infants were related to unsafe sleeping conditions and environments such as sleep position (on the stomach or side rather than on the back), sleep surface (an environment other than a crib or bassinet), the presence of excess bedding (more bedding than a bed sheet and one blanket), or bed-sharing with an adult or another child.

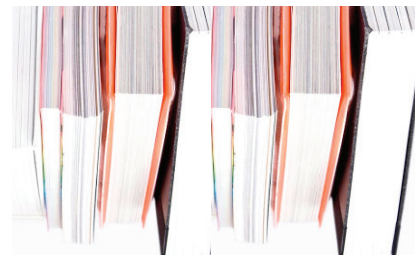
How can you create a safe sleep environment for infants?

1. Always place a baby on his or her back to sleep, for naps and at night.
2. The safest way for a baby to sleep is alone, whether napping or at bedtime, on a firm mattress in a safety-approved crib.
3. Keep soft objects, toys, and loose bedding out of a baby's sleep area.
4. Keep the baby's sleep area close to, but

separate from, where you and others sleep.

5. Don't let a baby sleep on a couch or chair, and don't sleep with a baby lying on your chest.
6. Let babies play on their stomach when awake. This will help strengthen their neck, back, and arms.
7. Think of using a clean, dry pacifier when placing an infant down to sleep.
8. Supervise infants closely.
9. Never smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs around a baby.
10. Get help when the stresses of parenting are overwhelming.

Additional data and safety messages are presented in the 2011 NYC Child Fatality Review Team Report available at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Website:
www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/ip/ip-index.shtml



The Book Corner

By Louise Lareau, Children's Librarian,
Children's Center, New York Public Library

Apples, pumpkins and falling leaves tell us that autumn has arrived. Get out and enjoy the beautiful fall colors. Before you know it, we will be able to take part in a variety of winter activities. Whether you ski, skate or sled, please stay safe and wear a helmet.

Ehlert, Lois. *Leaf Man*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2005.

Levenson, George. *Pumpkin Circle: the Story of a Garden*. Berkeley, CA: Tricycle Press, 1999.

Norman, Kimberly. *Ten on the Sled*. New York, NY: Sterling, 2010.

Ross, Kathy. *Crafts to Make in the Fall*. Brookfield, CT: Millbrook Press, 1998.

Schertle, Alice. *All You Need for a Snowman*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt, 2002.

Schnur, Steven. *Winter: an Alphabet Acrostic*. New York, NY: Clarion Books, 2002.

Shannon, George. *Rabbit's Gift: a Fable from China*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2007.

Thomas, Patricia. *Red Sled*. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press, 2008.

Safe Sleep for Your Baby

Safety-approved crib,
near your bed

Firm mattress,
fitted sheet

No smoking
around baby



Nothing but baby
in crib

On back

Sleep clothes,
no blanket

NYC
Health
www.nyc.gov/health
DIAL
311



Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

By Lauren Schwartz, NYC Poison Control Center

Odorless and colorless, carbon monoxide (CO) is a deadly gas produced by the incomplete burning of fuel. CO poisoning is the leading cause of poisoning death in the country. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), each year more than 500 deaths result from unintentional CO poisoning and thousands are seen in emergency departments to be treated for CO poisoning.

Although everyone is at risk, CO poisoning is the most dangerous for pregnant women, infants, older adults and people with health problems. Common sources of CO poisoning in the home include: heating systems that are not working properly, gas stoves used for heat, clogged or dirty chimneys and cars running in an enclosed space. The symptoms of CO poisoning are often similar to the flu (but without fever) and can easily be misdiagnosed. They include headache, nausea, dizziness, sleepiness and trouble breathing.

To prevent CO poisoning, be sure that a CO detector is installed in the sleeping areas of the home. NYC law requires landlords to provide CO detectors in most residences but the occupant is responsible for maintaining them. Remember to replace the batteries in the CO detector twice a year—when you change the clocks in the fall and spring. If your CO detector sounds, do not ignore the alarm. Open all windows, leave the area, call the fire department and call the NYC Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 or 212-POISONS (212-764-7667) for further instructions.

The registered pharmacists and nurses at the NYC Poison Center provide information and treatment advice 24 hours a day/7 days a week about poisons inside and outside the home. All calls are free of charge and

confidential. Translator services are provided in more than 150 languages. Free educational materials are available.

To Prevent CO Poisoning:

- Be sure to have all chimneys and heating systems checked each year by a professional
- Never use the stove or oven to heat the home
- Never run a car in a garage or against a snow bank
- Never use a charcoal grill in your home, a garage or tent
- Install CO detectors in the sleeping area of the home
- Save the number for the NYC Poison Control Center in your cell phone 1-800-222-1222



POISON
Help
1-800-222-1222



A message from the FDNY Fire Safety Unit

Change Your Clock!

Change Your Battery!

Protect Yourself!

Protect Your Family!

Protect Your Neighbors!

Smoke Alarms Save Lives!

Please call 718-281-3870 to invite the FDNY Fire Safety Unit do a free Fire Safety Education presentation at your school, PTA, or community group.

Be Aware: Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking of Children Is Around Us

By Damaris Rosario, Esq., Director, Safety First, NYC Administration for Children's Services

New York City parents may be unaware that New York and the greater tri-state area is a hub for human trafficking activity. Through the use of violence, deception or coercion, teens and children are driven into forced labor, domestic servitude, slavery-like practices or commercial sexual exploitation (i.e., prostitution). Teens and young adults are the usual victims, but school-age children are also prime targets of sex traffickers because of their unique vulnerability and gullibility, as well as the market demand for young victims. Traffickers approach teens and children on the streets and through friends, as well as via telephone chat-lines, social clubs, afterschool programs, fictitious storefronts/businesses, nail salons, massage parlors and malls. In particular, it is common for traffickers to utilize girls to recruit other girls at schools and after-school programs, and girls are among those most at risk of trafficking.

Boys are also in danger of being caught up in trafficking rings, and often suffer from anxiety and depression. Suicide attempts are widely observed in sexually exploited boys. There is a strong correlation between commercial sexual activity and substance abuse for boys that are trafficked. Girls that are trafficked show characteristics that are more varied and typically include forced prostitution, domestic violence, poverty, homelessness, mental and physical disability and/or a lack of legal immigration status.

With an ever increasing concern for the human trafficking of children in New York State, an Anti-Human Trafficking Law was enacted in 2007 to address this growing issue. In particular, the New York State Legislature recognized that human trafficking is a form of "modern day slavery" placing all of New York's children at risk. The statute not only aims to impose tough penalties on the labor trafficking of children, but also the sex trafficking and exploitation of children.

Additional Resource Information:

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
Charles B. Wang International Children's Building
699 Prince Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3175
<http://www.missingkids.com>

End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes [ECPAT - USA]
157 Montague Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201
Telephone: 718-935-9192
<http://www.ecpatusa.org>



Could a child you know be a victim of human trafficking? Trafficked and exploited children often:

- Are absent from school for long periods of time without explanation and seem to be unable to attend school on a regular basis
- Chronically run away from home and makes references to frequent travel to other cities
- Exhibit bruises or other physical trauma, withdrawn behavior, depression, or fear
- Lack control over her or his schedule and id documents
- Show signs of drug use and addiction
- Are always hungry or even malnourished
- Are inappropriately dressed for weather conditions
- Exhibit a sudden change in dress, behavior, or material possessions (e.g., has expensive items)
- Make references to sexual situations or terminology of the commercial sex industry that are beyond age specific norms
- Have a boyfriend/girlfriend who is noticeably older (10+ years)

Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drugs: A Steadily Growing Health Concern

Christopher Sorrentino, RN, Trauma Coordinator, Richmond University Medical Center
Eric Cohen, RN, Trauma Program Manager, Staten Island University Hospital

Recently, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) conducted a study that revealed a 23.2% drop in the use of illicit drugs such as marijuana, crack, and cocaine. At the same time, however, prescription and over the counter (OTC) drug use and misuse has been steadily on the rise and continues to increase steadily today (Source: NYC Department of Health). Parents and caregivers, along with health care professionals, need to be very aware of the dangerous effects that prescription and OTC drugs can carry for children of all ages. This problem is national, but is local as well. The highest rate of accidental deaths from prescription pain killers is in middle class neighborhoods of Staten Island, where there is also a high rate of prescriptions filled.

According to the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) 1.5 million children have reported that they have abused prescription drugs. OTC medicines are a big problem, too. Over two million American kids have intentionally abused cough syrup, while 1 in 4 teens report a close friend who abuses

cough medicine to get high. Every day, 2,700 teens are getting high for the first time with a prescription medicine.

Many national campaigns have been successful in educating parents and children on the terrible physical and emotional risks that illicit drugs can have on an individual. Unfortunately, fewer people are aware of the dangers of abusing prescription drugs and OTC medications. According to the NYS DOH, half of American teens do not see a great risk in abusing prescription or OTC drugs. Teens believe that abuse of prescription and OTC medicines is safer than street drugs. Such drugs are easily accessible from home medicine cabinets and over the internet. Over half of the teens agree that prescription drugs are easier to get than illegal drugs.

Prescription drugs are everywhere -- at home, in medicine cabinets, at friends' and family members' homes, and even via the internet. Many parents still believe that prescription drugs are safer than illicit drugs and few

parents take the time or have the tools necessary to educate their children on the negative consequences that taking these drugs involves. According to the NYS DOH, only 31% of teens "learn about the risk of [prescription and over-the-counter] drugs" from their parents.

As the prescription and OTC epidemic continues to surge, we need to take immediate steps that will drive these numbers down. Parents can help by educating themselves about the problem of abuse and sharing that information with their children. They need to safeguard medications at home and set clear limits and rules about drug use for their children and teens, and ask other family members and friends to do the same. Parents are the best role models for their children, and by taking medications as directed and as needed, discarding old and expired medications, and never sharing prescription medications, they can model safe and healthy behavior for their children and teens.



10 Good Reasons to Laugh for No Reason

From *Healing Thru Yoga Laughter*,
www.yogalaff.com

1. Laughter is a stress buster. It reduces the levels of stress hormones epinephrine and cortisol
2. Laughter strengthens the immune system. Laughter will increase the count of natural killer cells (NK cells – a type of white blood cell) and antibody levels
3. Laughter is anti-ageing. It tones facial muscles and expressions – and people look younger and more fun when they laugh!
4. Laughter is aerobic exercise. Laughter stimulates heart and blood circulation and is equivalent to any other standard aerobic exercise.
5. Laughter is internal jogging. It massages internal organs by enhancing the blood supply and increasing their efficiency.
6. Laughter is a natural pain killer. Laughter increases the level of endorphins – the body's natural pain killers.
7. Laughter can control high blood pressure. It helps to control blood pressure by reducing the release of stress-related hormones. (But don't stop taking your blood pressure medication.)
8. Laughter can help dump depression and anxiety. Laughter can help you sleep better and reduce depression, lessening the stress and strain of modern life.
9. Laughter alleviates bronchitis and asthma. Laughter improves lung capacity and oxygen levels in the blood.
10. Laughter just makes you feel good. Laugh and the world laughs with you. How you react to life is up to you. Live



I Guess I Wasn't Paying Attention...

By Michelle Kaucic, MPA, Community Coordinator, NYC Dept. of Transportation, Safety Education Division

In 2009, 5,474 people were killed in U.S. roadways and an estimated additional 448,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes that were reported to have involved distracted driving. (www.distraction.gov).

We often assume that it's our inexperienced children or our media-focused teens that are at risk, but adults too should take inventory of the things that distract them from the task of driving—or even crossing the street safely. After becoming a certified child passenger safety technician about four years ago, I began inspecting child seats for parents in New York City. One of the first things I notice when a car approaches is the mirror that is often attached to rear head restraint above the car seat. It's an after-market product that gives parents the ability to see their rear-facing child. However, beyond the potential of becoming a projectile in a crash, the mirror requires the driver to look from rear-view mirror in front to the accessory mirror and then finally to baby –taking their eyes away from the road for extended periods of time. We know... the baby is really cute; but you owe it to that adorable bundle of joy to stay focused on the road.

Here in New York City, the most common cause of traffic crashes is driver inattention. In 36% of crashes where pedestrians were killed or seriously injured, the drivers that struck them were simply not paying attention. This issue has become more pressing as cell phones and other portable devices further distract drivers. The 2010 New York City Pedestrian Safety Study & Action Plan <http://home2.nyc.gov/html/dot/>

html/about/pedsafetyreport.shtml) reminds us that in a dense urban environment like New York City, the failure to pay attention to who (and what) is in the road is crucial. The streets are consistently populated by a wide range of users (pedestrians, bicyclists, buses, trucks, taxis) all competing for the same roadway space.

Distractions behind the wheel are not only dangerous; they can get you in trouble with the law. As of July 2011, the New York State hands-free device law was upgraded to a primary offense. This means you may be stopped if an officer observes the behavior, charged 3 driver penalty points and fined up to \$150 (www.safeny.com). With a little preparation, you'll be able to devote your full attention to the task of driving. These tips from the AAA Foundation (www.aaafoundation.org) are a great place to start:

- Plan ahead
- Stow electronic devices
- Prepare kids and pets for the trip
- Satisfy that craving off the road
- Store loose gear and possessions
- Get your vehicle road-ready
- Dress for success before you get in the car
- Get your brain in the game
- Evaluate your own behavior from the 'other' side of the road
- Use new technology to make you a better driver

photo courtesy of csac-eia.org