Public Health Spotlight
Reducing Unintentional Injuries in 0-5 year olds
January 2019

Welcome to the second public health update for all of our elected members. This month we focus on the work being undertaken to reduce the risk of unintentional injuries occurring in our young children.

Please help spread these important prevention messages to all families in your wards.

Take Action Today, Put Them Away campaign – a scheme to encourage families with young children to think about the safe storage of cleaning products.

Young children in our borough are known to have been admitted to hospital for ingestion of hazards such as medicines, cleaning products and batteries.

The project provides a tool for front line services to promote safety messages, covering household poisoning in various guises (cleaning products, medicines etc.), and incorporating other issues relating to gas appliances, electronics, and gardening equipment.

Take Action Today, Put Them Away advice to parents includes:

- store household cleaning products out of reach of children, preferably in a locked cupboard.
- always store chemicals in their original containers.
- never pierce or break laundry capsules or tablets.
- always close the lid of any product.
- in the event of an incident, follow advice on the product pack and seek medical attention.

Burns Awareness

The Countess of Chester NHS Foundation Hospital has seen 272 children under 4 years old in A&E for burn related injuries in the last two years. Of these children, 10% required medical transfer to specialist treatment settings.

Top causes of burns and scalds are:

- tea or coffee cup
- electric oven
- hair straighteners
- hot fluids

First Aid advice from the British Burn Association:

1. Cool the burn with running cold tap water for 20 minutes and remove all clothing and jewellery (unless it is melted or firmly stuck to the wound)

2. Call for help – 999, 111 or local GP for advice

3. Cover with cling film or a sterile, non-fluffy dressing or cloth.



Safety guidance in the home:

- keep hot drinks out of reach of babies and young children - a hot drink can still scald 20 minutes after it was made.
- keep saucepans at the back of the stove NOT near the front – turn handles to the back.
- keep kettles, irons, hair straighteners or wires out of reach.
- don't warm baby bottles in microwaves.
- never leave children unattended in the kitchen or near fires and heaters.
- put hot drinks down before you hold your baby.
- after warming a bottle of milk, shake the bottle well and test the temperature of the milk by placing a few drops on the inside of your wrist before feeding – it should feel lukewarm, not hot.
- do not let your child drink a hot drink through a straw.

Button Batteries

Families should keep potentially dangerous products out of reach of babies, toddlers and small children, making sure spare and used batteries are stored somewhere they can't be found.

If ingested, most button batteries pass through the body without a problem but, if one gets stuck in the throat or gullet, energy from the battery, especially a lithium one, reacts with saliva to make the body create caustic soda, the same chemical used to unblock drains. Even when a battery is apparently flat, it can cause serious harm.

All batteries are a risk to children, but it matters how big the child is and the size and power of the battery. With a large, powerful lithium coin cell battery and a small child, there is a greater risk.

How to keep children safe:

- make sure all spare batteries are in a sealed container out of a child's reach and sight. This would ideally be in a high-up, lockable cupboard.
- keep products with batteries well out of reach if the battery compartment isn't secured.
- put flat or dead batteries out of reach straight away and recycle them safely.
- avoid toys from markets, discount stores or temporary shops as they may not meet safety regulations. Take care when also buying online or from overseas.
- teach older children that button batteries are dangerous and not to play with them or give them to younger brothers and sisters.

Read more at www.capt.org.uk/button-batteries about the risks and where button batteries can be found.

I would really value your feedback and recommendations for future updates. Please send through your views to publichealth@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Thank you for your continued support.



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