

# **Buy Wise - Be Safe**

## *Information Booklet*



**This booklet will remind you about some of the important purchasing and safety information that we gave you on the film.**

*We've also included a list of useful website addresses for more information.  
Many local libraries have internet access for the general public.*

*Produced for you by Trading Standards in South West England*

## Car Seats

- Choose a car seat that is suitable for your child's size and weight.
- Babies should be in a rearward facing seat. Do not use a forward facing seat until your baby weighs more than 9kg and can sit up unaided.
- Never use a rear facing seat in the front if your car has an airbag on the passenger's side. Make sure the seat will fit properly in the back.
- If your car has airbags covering rear seat passengers, consult the vehicle manufacturer.
- Check that the seat is suitable for your car. The shape of the seat, the length of seat belts and the position of belt anchorage points will vary. The manufacturer and the retailer can advise on this.
- Choose a retailer who is knowledgeable and who will demonstrate how to fit the seat. Avoid buying by mail order unless you are certain it will fit your car properly.
- Are the instructions easy to understand and follow? Make sure that you know how to fit the seat and that it is fitted properly each time you use it. Always keep a copy of the fitting instructions in your car.

- Check that the seat meets the latest safety standard, ECE R44.03.
- Make sure the baby is in the car seat on every journey, no matter how short. It's the law!
- Correctly adjust the seat harness for your child - it should be quite tight, so that only 2 fingers can fit between the child's chest and harness.
- Never try to modify a child car seat or a seat belt to get it to fit.
- Children under 3 may not travel in the front unless they are in a child restraint.

*Never buy a second hand seat, it may have been involved in an accident and seriously damaged, although that damage may not be readily apparent. Only accept a seat from a family member or friend if you are certain of its history, it comes with instructions and is not too old.*

# Cots

Your baby will spend a lot of time in their cot. Make sure it is safe and secure.

- Your new cot should conform to EN 716.
- Check the mattress for fire safety labelling and ensure that it fits snugly so the baby cannot get trapped down the side.
- Read the instructions to make sure that the cot is assembled properly and you know how to use the drop side catches.
- Never leave anything in a cot that the child can use as a foothold to help it climb out.
- Positioning of the cot is important. Never place it in direct sunlight or by a radiator. Keep the cot away from shelves where objects could fall onto your baby.

*If your cot is second hand make sure that the base is secure and that your baby cannot easily release the drop-side catches.*

# Fireguards & Other Hot Points

Burns and scalds are common injuries for young children. They are painful, and take a long time to heal, as children have delicate skin. Protect your child with these points:

- Fit a fireguard around your fireplace. It should fit right round the hearth, and be fixed to the wall on either side of the fire. It should be more than 30 cm/one foot from the fire. Never place washing or clothes on the fireguard.
- A cup of tea can scald a child up to 15 minutes after it has been poured out. Keep mugs and cups of hot drinks away from table and worktop edges. Never hold a baby or toddler while having a hot drink. Hot drinks are the top cause of severe burns to the under-fives.
- Turn the hot water thermostat down to below 45°C, and always check the temperature of the water with your elbow before putting baby in the bath. Never leave a baby or toddler alone in the bath - even for a second.
- Don't leave kettle flexes hanging down for toddlers to reach. Curly flexes are safest.
- Keep handles of pots and pans turned away from the edges of cookers and work surfaces. Cooker guards may not stop a toddler pulling a saucepan over.
- Oven doors, the glass in washing machines and irons are all hot enough to give a child a nasty burn.

# High Chairs

## When buying a highchair look for:

- A wide base, so it won't tip over.
- A five point harness - one strap between the legs and two on either side. Make sure you can fasten and unfasten it easily - otherwise you won't use it!

## When using it:

- Think about where to put it. Do not place it next to a table, wall, counter, cooker or anything else the baby can push off from. Make sure the floor surface is not slippery or raised.
- Before feeding your baby, make sure you have everything you are going to need within easy reach.
- Always use the harness. Never rely on the feeding tray alone to keep your baby in.
- Never leave your baby unattended in a high chair.
- When not in use, it should be stored out of reach of children, so they do not try to climb it.

# More safety hints

## Smoke alarms

As a minimum fit one on each floor of your home. For maximum protection fit an alarm in every room - except the kitchen and bathroom, unless you have specialist alarms for these rooms. Try to fit alarms with long life batteries or interconnected alarms. Check the alarm every month and change the battery once a year. Vacuum and wipe the casing and slots to remove dust.

## Children's clothing

Children are particularly vulnerable to fire risks so choose nightwear and babywear that is safer from fire. Children's nightdresses, nightshirts, dressing gowns and bathrobes (except terry towelling) should all pass a flammability test and so do not need to be marked 'low flammability'.

Children's pyjamas, bathrobes in 100% terry towelling and all clothes for babies up to 3 months old must carry permanent labels advising whether the garment passes a flammability test. Look for a label stating 'Low flammability to BS5722'. If the label merely says 'keep away from fire' the garment may not pass the tests and you'll need to take extreme care.

## **Glass**

Ordinary glass is dangerous - particularly at low level - as it breaks into large jagged pieces which could cause serious injury. The Building Regulations require safety glass to be fitted in glazed doors, side panels and areas below 800mm in height (approx 2ft 7in) in new homes.

Safety glass is specially made to 'break safely', reducing the risk of injury. Laminated and toughened glass are the two main types of safety glass. If you cannot afford to replace the glass then a purpose made safety film is available which will retain broken parts in one piece. Don't forget that safety glass should also be fitted in furniture such as cupboards, dressers, table tops etc.

## **Poisons**

Always store medicines and poisons out of sight and out of reach of young hands and, where possible, under lock and key. Many chemicals are sold in child resistant containers so always put the top back on when you use them and never decant chemicals into jam jars or lemonade bottles. Don't store cleaners by the lavatory or on low shelves in the kitchen.

# Pushchairs

## Buying new?

- All new pushchairs should be safe. Look for BS 7409:1996 and the message 'warning - a child's safety is your responsibility'. This is usually on the frame or seat covering.
- Make sure it is suitable for your needs. A baby cannot safely sit up until at least 3 months. A baby may outgrow a pushchair in a matter of months. Some have space for carrying shopping safely - others don't.

## Using your pushchair

- Never leave a child unattended in a pushchair, even for a second.
- Don't hang shopping from the pushchair handles.
- Do not overload with extra passengers unless you have a manufacturer's approved clip-on board for your pushchair.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for maintenance. Check the brakes and harness regularly.
- Don't stick your pushchair into the road whilst waiting to cross.

## Second hand or re-using an older child's pushchair?

- Since 1990, all pushchairs should be labelled 'carelessness causes fire'. If it doesn't have this label it is too old to be used.

- Check the parking brake works both forwards and backwards.
- Look out for finger traps and sharp edges.
- Make sure there are two locks to stop it from folding up.
- 5 point safety harnesses stop your baby from sliding out. Many old pushchairs only have 3 point harnesses. Make sure the harness is not frayed or damaged, and the buckle is secure and easy to use.
- Is it stable in all directions?
- Check the wheels for heavy wear.
- Are there instructions to help you use it safely? Can you get replacement instructions from the manufacturer?

## Safety Gates

Falling down stairs is all too common an accident for younger children. Safety gates or barriers can prevent children taking a tumble. They may also be useful in doorways to protect youngsters from other dangers, such as in the kitchen.

Before buying, work out where you want the barrier and measure up carefully. You may need a gate at the top and the bottom of the stairs.

- Fix the gate in accordance with the instructions and do not leave a gap greater than 5cm underneath as your child

could become trapped. Check that the gate opens the way you need it to.

- Do not fit a gate too close to the bottom stair as the child could use the stair to climb over the gate.
- Always fit gates that do not have a trip hazard at the top of the stairs.
- Regularly check that the gate or barrier remains firmly in position.
- Don't allow your child to climb or play on the gate. Do not hang toys on to the gate which will attract baby.
- Some barriers are sold with cups that fix on the wall where you want to use the barrier. Extra sets of cups allow the barrier to be used in several places around the house. Make sure that you tighten up the buffers on the barrier each time you use it and ensure you fix the cups firmly according to the manufacturer's instructions
- Always keep the gate closed. An open gate can be as dangerous as no gate at all.

*Think twice about buying second hand barriers or gates. Older style barriers do not use cups for attachment and could collapse if a child pushes against it. This could be serious if the barrier is placed at the top of the stairs.*

# Safety Marks

You and your child are protected by safety laws that ensure that nearly everything sold is at least reasonably safe. Manufacturers, importers and Trading Standards Officers together spend millions of pounds each year making sure new products are safe. Look for these signs that show goods are up to safety standards.

- **British and European Standards.** These are drawn up by manufacturers, safety experts and others to establish minimum quality standards. By law, goods should pass the safety sections of these standards. They are often marked on the packaging of the product, and in some cases are on the product itself.

Child Safety Seats: ECE R44.03

Children's Toys: EN71

Cots: EN716

Fireguards: BS 6539

High Chairs: BS 5799

Pushchairs and Prams: BS7409

Safety Gates: EN1930

Smoke Alarms: BS5446

- Kite mark. Products with the kite mark have their production methods inspected by BSI. A requirement is that their products are independently tested at regular intervals.
- CE marks. Some goods have to be marked with CE to show they pass European standards. Examples are toys and electrical goods. You should also look for all warnings that are written by the mark. A toy that is safe for a 5 year old may be dangerous when played with by a younger brother or sister. Anything that looks like a toy but does not have a CE mark should not be given to a child.

*All new products should be up to minimum safety standards. You need to check they are suitable for your and your child's, needs.*

*Second hand goods may have been built to an old standard, or there may not have been a standard at all when they were made. Wear and tear may have made them unsafe. Check them carefully before buying or using.*

*If in any doubt about the safety of items designed for young children - especially second hand - don't use them.*

## Second Hand

When money is tight it is tempting to buy nursery goods from the small ads or car boot sales.

The 'bargain' could do a great deal of harm if it proves to be faulty. Buying new products rather than second hand could be a wise investment.

You may be able to get a grant, see "Sure Start Maternity Grant" on the list of websites.

The main drawbacks to second hand goods are:

- Missing instruction books containing vital information about the product's use or maintenance may be missing. Without these your child may be in danger.
- Many second hand items fail to meet any safety standards, never mind the latest ones.
- The item may be worn, damaged or abused, even though this may not show. No product lasts for ever and some wear out quickly and could cause injury.

# Useful Websites

For further safety information you may wish to explore the following websites. Don't forget your local library may offer free internet access.

Car Seats

*[www.childcarseats.org.uk](http://www.childcarseats.org.uk)*

Child Accident Prevention Trust

*[www.capt.org.uk](http://www.capt.org.uk)*

Child Safety

*[www.safechild.net](http://www.safechild.net)*

Consumer's Association

*[www.which.net](http://www.which.net)*

Department of Health

*[www.doh.gov.uk](http://www.doh.gov.uk)*

Institute of Home Safety

*[www.homesafe.org.uk](http://www.homesafe.org.uk)*

Kidrap

*[www.cbildsafety.co.uk](http://www.cbildsafety.co.uk)*

RoSPA

*[www.rospace.co.uk](http://www.rospace.co.uk)*

Sure Start

*[www.surestart.gov.uk](http://www.surestart.gov.uk)*

Sure Start Maternity Grant

*[www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)*

**Information about your local Trading Standards Service can be found at [www.tradingstandards.gov.uk](http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk)**

For general advice about consumer goods and services



Consumer Direct South West is delivered in partnership by local authority Trading Standards services and the Office of Fair Trading

