



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Keeping Kids Safe

Publication of the World Report on Child Injury Prevention

Recorded: December 16, 2008; posted: December 18, 2008

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Susan Laird] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm Susan Laird, filling in for your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

We have them vaccinated, take them for regular checkups, and ensure that they eat a healthy diet. But the number one killer of children in the United States is not disease. The leading cause of death among kids 19 years and younger is unintentional injuries, or accidents. Each year, more than 12,000 U.S. children die from unintentional injuries.

Dr. Julie Gilchrist is a pediatrician with CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. She's joining us today to discuss the how to prevent these injuries among children. Welcome to the show, Dr. Gilchrist.

[Dr. Gilchrist] Thank you very much.

[Susan Laird] Dr. Gilchrist, are injuries among children going to happen, no matter what we do?

[Dr. Gilchrist] Well, CDC believes that most injuries are preventable. And we all need to know what the risks are and how we can prevent them to keep our children safe. CDC is working to provide information and resources to help parents be aware of both the risks and how to prevent the injuries.

[Susan Laird] What types of injuries are most common among children?

[Dr. Gilchrist] Well, the most common type of non-fatal injury are falls, especially in children 0 to 14 years – it's the leading cause. And falls can be any number of things. In small children, we worry about them falling down the stairs when there's not a stair gate to prevent them from falling. In older children, it can be, you know, sports-related. Like they fall on a playing field or they fall out of a tree. So falls are a big concern.

[Susan Laird] Well, what kinds of injuries cause the most deaths?

[Dr. Gilchrist] Well, the leading cause of death in children varies by age group. In children under one, it's suffocation, and it's oftentimes related to their bedding or their sleeping arrangements. In children one to four, it's unintentional drowning, and that's oftentimes in their own backyard pool. In children 5 to 19, the leading cause of death is motor-vehicle crashes, and most often, they're occupants.

[Susan Laird] Are there any products CDC believes can prevent child injuries?

[Dr. Gilchrist] Absolutely. What parents need to know is that there are things that they can do to prevent certain injuries, and these may vary by the age of their child. So, for instance, motor-vehicle crashes is the leading cause of death, well child safety seats and the appropriate booster seat being used for the right age group is critical in keeping children safe. For other causes of injury, like drowning, putting up a four-sided isolation fence around the pool to separate the pool from the house is critical. Other things, like life jackets, protective sports gear, stair gates to prevent falls, and window guards are also really important. And all of these tips are available in our prevention materials.

[Susan Laird] What else can parents do to create a safer environment for their children?

[Dr. Gilchrist] To prevent injuries from fires and burns, install and maintain your smoke detector and develop and practice your fire escape plan. For drownings, learning CPR and knowing what to do in an emergency is very important. To prevent falls in young children, things like appropriate surfacing for playground equipment so that if children fall, they aren't injured. And poisonings are common among small children. Storing medicines and toxic products, such as cleaning solutions, in places that children can't get at them is very important.

[Susan Laird] What does CDC have available to help parents?

[Dr. Gilchrist] Well, along with the CDC Childhood Injury Report, the Center has also launched an initiative called "Protect the Ones You Love: Child Injuries are preventable." And this initiative is dedicated to raising parents' awareness and supporting their efforts to ensure their children's safety. Parents and anyone else who plays a role in keeping children safe can find a variety of child injury prevention resources, including fact sheets, additional podcasts, and e-cards.

[Dr. Gaynes] So where can listeners get more information about preventing injuries among children?

[Dr. Gilchrist] These are all available at our website. It's www.cdc.gov/safechild.

[Susan Laird] Thanks, Dr. Gilchrist.

I've been talking today with Dr. Julie Gilchrist, a CDC pediatrician, about preventing injuries among children. She's reminded us that CDC has a wealth of resources available to help keep children safe. Go to the website – www.cdc.gov/safechild. And remember to protect the ones you love; child injuries are preventable.

Until next time, be well. This is Susan Laird for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.