Safety made simple

Parents' pack

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Safe from burns

"Everyone in the burns unit was there because of an accident. In a split second their whole life changed."

Mum of little boy burned by a hot drink

A small child's skin burns really easily as it's so thin. Here's how to prevent serious burns:

Hot drinks – can stay hot enough to scald even after 15 minutes. 8 to 18 month-olds are most vulnerable as they love to grab.

- Watch out for fast little fingers when you're making a hot drink. Push your mug to the back of the worktop before you reach for the milk
- Look for out-of-reach safe spots to put your hot drink down
- Make it a habit to put your child down before you pick up your drink.

Hair straighteners – can get as hot as your iron and can still burn 15 minutes after they are switched off.

- Keep hot hair straighteners and wands out of reach
- Put them in a heat-proof pouch or on a high shelf to cool.

Button batteries – if a child swallows a button battery and it gets stuck, it can burn a hole and cause internal bleeding and even death.

- Keep any loose batteries out of reach and dispose of 'flat' batteries quickly and safely
- Keep objects with easy to access button batteries out of reach.

Magnetic toys – high-strength magnets in toys can rip through the gut if your child swallows them.

- Buy from a reputable retailer or a brand name you know. Avoid online marketplaces.

Cooking – young children won't always pull away from something that's burning them. They may forget the rules about not touching hot things.

- Push kettles to the back of the worktop and use the back rings of the cooker first
- If you're able to, keep children away from the kitchen when you're cooking. Or try to keep them in a highchair and away from the cooker if not.

Bath water – these scalds are really nasty and can happen in seconds.

- Put cold water in first then top up with hot.
- Test the temperature of the water with your elbow before putting your child into the bath
- Stay with your child in the bathroom in case they fiddle with the hot tap.

Staying warm

- Move cots away from radiators. Then your baby can't get their arm or leg trapped against the heat
- Fit fireguards around fires and heaters
- Check your hot water bottle for wear and tear. Replace every two years.

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Your dog and your new baby

If you've a baby on the way, now's the time to start preparing your dog. Gradually introduce changes in your home and routines, using rewards your dog enjoys, to help them cope well with the new arrival.

Things to start early

- Think about how your walking times or routes might differ and start to introduce changes
- Get your dog used to being by themselves in another room, either with the door closed or with a safety gate
- You could make them their own quiet space away from the main living room.

When you have baby things

- If you've been given or bought any baby things, set them up as soon as you have them so your dog can sniff and get used to them
- If you have a pram, you could practice with your dog walking alongside it
- Try using a doll as a pretend baby. Praise your dog or give treats when they keep their paws on the ground around the doll
- If you have a phone to play baby sounds on, this can help your dog get used to new noises

Baby's arrival

- Ask a family member to walk the dog before you bring the baby home, so they're relaxed
- Say hello to your dog first. Then introduce the baby in a quiet room
- Give your dog lots of treats for good behaviour.

At home with your baby

- Always stay with your baby when your dog is there
- Avoid putting your baby down on the floor or in a Moses basket on the floor
- If you have a crib downstairs, use a safety gate or keep it where your dog won't be able to knock it over.

Still worried?

- If you're worried by the way your dog is with your child, talk to your vet. They'll check your dog's health and can refer you to a qualified animal behaviourist.
- Visit the **Animal Behaviour and Training Council** website to find a qualified behaviourist near you.

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Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

DogsTrust

RSPCA

This work was supported by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)

Safety around dogs

The bond between your child and dog can bring fun and happiness to family life. We don't expect our own dog to bite, but any dog can bite if they feel they have no other option.

Children are most likely to be bitten at home, by a familiar dog. Luckily most bites are preventable and close supervision is key.

A calm, happy dog is less likely to react unsafely to children's natural exuberance.

- Give your dog a safe space of their own where they can go if they need time out. Have a rule to leave them alone when they're there.
- Keep them occupied – physical exercise and mental activity help keep your dog happy.
- Teach your child to be calm and kind with your dog. Avoid shouting, teasing or restrictive cuddles.

Close supervision is the most important thing to keep children safe.

- Watch, listen and remain close when your child and dog are together.
- If either your dog or child seems unhappy, positively and calmly separate them. You can throw your dog a treat or toy, or lead your child away.
- **Understand your dog's body language** so you can spot signs they feel uncomfortable or stressed.
- When you know you'll be distracted during busier times, use safety gates to keep children and dogs separate. Or, take your child or dog with you.

Trigger times – teach your child to leave your dog alone when they are:

- Sleeping – no-one likes to be woken up suddenly.
- Eating or having a treat – they might think you're going to take their food.
- Have a toy or something else they really like – they might not want to share!

Your growing child – as your child changes, the risks can change too.

- Teach the rules to your child from an early age and keep explaining them as your child understands more.
- As your child becomes more mobile, review changes needed, like adding safety gates.
- Think ahead about your changing family life and new risks that can emerge. Read our fact sheet on bringing baby home.

Still worried?

- If you're worried by the way your dog is with your child, talk to your vet. They'll check your dog's health and can refer you to a qualified animal behaviourist.
- Visit the **Animal Behaviour and Training Council** website to find a qualified behaviourist near you.

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Prevent poisoning

"He thought it was a sweetie because it was bright and like a jelly so he gave it to Orla who bit into it."

Mum talking about washing tabs/pods

Bright bottles of cleaning liquid, squidgy washing tablets, shiny packets of painkillers... Small children are curious and want to learn more by putting things in their mouth.

Unfortunately things that make our lives easier can be harmful to small children, as their bodies process poisons differently. Thank goodness it's easy to keep children safe.

Laundry products – small children can mistake brightly coloured products for sweets or toys, especially laundry capsules. But the concentrated chemicals can do serious damage to children's insides, skin and eyes.

- It's tempting to keep products beside the washing machine. Move them to a high up or lockable cupboard
- Watch out for fast little fingers! Don't leave a washing tablet on top of the washing
- Put products away out of reach as soon as you've used them
- When you're shopping, look out for products with a bittering agent like Bitrex - it tastes so horrible, children spit it out instead of swallowing, preventing accidental poisoning.

Everyday painkillers – the most common way for young children to be poisoned.

- Keep all medicines out of reach and sight of young children, ideally in a high up or lockable cupboard
- Watch out for painkillers left on the bedside table or in the handbag on the floor.

Cleaning products – helpful for you but they can be harmful for small children.

- What's lurking under your sink or next to your toilet? Move cleaning products to a high up or lockable cupboard
- Put them out of reach again as after use
- Don't rely on safety caps – they slow children down but they're not childproof
- Look out for products with a bittering agent like Bitrex when you're shopping
- Don't pour cleaning products into other bottles like drinks bottles. Children can get confused.

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Breathe easy

"He would have been much too young and would have been much too weak to release himself."

Coroner's report, blind cord strangulation

Such a scary thought that something could stop your child breathing. But, the steps to stop that happening are simple and make sense.

Window blinds – It can take just 15 seconds for a toddler to lose consciousness if a blind cord is caught around their neck – and they can die in just two to three minutes.

- Fit a cleat hook or tensioner to keep blind cords and chains safely away and always use them. New blinds should come with these
- Consider cord free blinds for children's rooms
- Remember children may climb and get higher than you think. Move bedroom furniture away from cords and chains
- Make sure the cords on the back of Roman blinds are connected using a device that breaks under pressure.

Sleeping and slings – babies can be suffocated by things they can't push away.

- A clear cot is a safe cot – avoid duvets, pillows and cot bumpers
- Don't sleep on the sofa with your baby as it increases their chances of suffocation massively
- If you're exhausted or have been drinking or smoking, or if they are premature or low birth weight, don't sleep with your baby in your bed
- Follow the T.I.C.K.S advice for slings or carriers **www.babyslingsafety.co.uk**

Nappy sacks – young babies naturally grasp things and pull them to their mouths, but aren't able to pull them away. They can suffocate on flimsy nappy sacks.

- Store nappy sacks well out of reach of babies
- Never store nappy sacks under the cot mattress.

Choking – babies and young children are still learning to chew, swallow and breathe in the right order. There's no sound to warn you. But there are simple ways to stop it happening.

- Don't prop a baby's bottle up to feed them
- Cut round food like grapes, tomatoes and big blueberries in half lengthways or quarters, not just across
- Cut hard food like carrots, apples, sausages and cheese into thin strips, and chop nuts up small
- Avoid popcorn, marshmallows and hard round sweets like mini eggs or boiled sweets
- Put small parts from older children's toys out of reach
- Watch the Chokeables film for first aid advice **www.sja.org.uk/thechokeables**

Free from falls

"A preventable accident ends up with a shattered family. And that's just very tragic."

Paediatric Neurologist (a doctor who specialises in child brain injury)

Scrapes and bruises are a part of growing up. But even a fall from a highchair can cause a bad head injury. That's because babies' heads are twice as big as ours, which makes them top-heavy. And when they land, their head takes much of the impact.

It doesn't make sense trying to stop all falls. But there are some serious ones you can easily stop once you know how and why.

Cots, beds and changing tables – now I can wriggle and roll!

- Even small babies can wriggle off a bed or changing table – so change their nappies on the floor and avoid leaving them on a raised surface
- As soon as your baby can stand, remove any large toys they might climb on to get out of their cot, preventing serious falls.

Stairs – I can shuffle and I'm off!

- Even before they're mobile, babies are injured when the person carrying them falls. So keep a hand on the rail going up and down stairs
- As soon as your baby starts moving around, fit safety gates to stop them climbing or falling down the stairs.

Highchairs – is that my drink?

- Children may try to get things that are out of their reach
- They may lean over the side and topple out or push themselves up and try to climb out
- Get into the habit of using the straps on the highchair every time you use it.

Windows – what's that I can see?

- Small children are curious and want to see what's happening outside but have no real understanding of danger
- Take care not to put furniture in front of windows, especially in children's bedrooms
- If you can, get safety catches or locks fitted on your windows
- If you opt for a lock, keep the keys somewhere you can find them, in case there's a fire and you need to get out.

Trampolines – how high can I bounce?

- The biggest risk from trampolines is having two people with very different weights
- Let children take it in turns and avoid adults and children jumping together
- Use a safety net or cage so children can't be thrown onto the ground.

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Safe around roads

"One act of bad driving robbed the world of a beautiful, intelligent and caring young person. Our lives have been turned upside down by our daughter's death."

Bereaved Dad whose daughter was killed in a car accident

It can be hard knowing how best to teach your child to stay safe. Here we help you to break it down and keep it simple.

Pedestrians – younger children

- Get young children into the habit of holding your hand or use walking reins
- Ask questions while you're out to help them understand simple ideas like 'fast' and 'slow'
- You can start teaching the Green Cross Code from age five, encouraging children to stop, look, listen and think
- But they won't always remember safety rules, especially if they're excited or spot a friend across the road
- Children will copy what you do, so try to avoid stepping into the road without checking for traffic first. If you can do the right thing, it will help them get into good habits.

Pedestrians – older children

- Children find it difficult judging the speed and distance of traffic until they're at least eight. Accidents peak around 12, as children start making independent journeys
- Children learn by doing and practising. If they're moving to a new school, help them practise the route over the holidays. Where are the safe places to cross? What should they do if they see their bus and they're on the other side of the road?
- They can be mesmerised by their mobiles, so remind them not to talk or text on their phones or listen to music while crossing the road.

In the car

- Make sure your car seat is the right one for your child's height and weight and for your car - not all seats fit all cars

Cycling

- Get your child into the habit of wearing their helmet. If you cycle as a family, remember to wear yours too
- Look out for cycle training. Many schools offer courses to help children gain practical skills.

Driving – speed is everything when it comes to a child's chances of survival. They're 3.5 times more likely to die if hit by a car doing between 30-40 mph.

- Keep an eye on your speed
- Keep your phone in the glove compartment so it can't distract you.

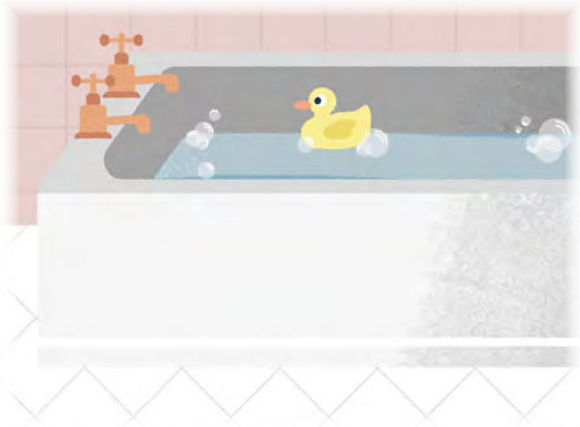
Watch out in water

"This has highlighted the dangers posed when a child is left unsupervised for a short period of time and even in the shallowest of water."

Coroner's report, bath seat drowning of 7-month-old

Drowning happens silently. A drowning child can't speak or control their arms. They slip quietly under the water. It's only in the movies they splash about and cry for help. It's a scary thought.

But once you understand how and where drowning happens, there are things you can do to prevent it.



Babies and small children – mostly drown at home in the bath or in the garden, in just a few centimetres of water. Keep them at arm's reach.

Baths

- Bath seats are great for supporting your baby in the bath but they're not safety aids – a baby shouldn't be left alone in one even for a moment as they can slip out
- Get everything you need ready before bath time because you'll need to stay with your baby or young child all the time they're in the bath
- Don't rely on your toddler to keep an eye on the baby while you pop out for a towel, as they're still too young to understand danger.

In the garden

- Empty the paddling pool out after you've used it
- Turn a pond into a sandpit, or fence it in or cover it while your children are little
- Make sure your child can't get to the neighbour's pond
- Be alert to ponds, pools or hot tubs when visiting other people's homes.

Older children – can still get into difficulties. They may over-estimate how strong a swimmer they are or under-estimate risks in the sea or open water. Teach them to float until help arrives.

Out and about

- Teach older children to choose safe places to swim like public pools and beaches with lifeguards
- Explain the dangers of swimming in open water, including strong currents, deep, cold water and things under the surface they can't see.

At the beach

- Teach children to swim between the two-coloured red and yellow flags – these mark the areas patrolled by lifeguards
- Inflatables can be swept out to sea when the wind is blowing – keep children off inflatables when the orange windsock is flying and always keep an eye on them.

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Keep button batteries away from your child

If your child swallows a button battery, it can get stuck in their food pipe. It can burn through to the main artery and badly harm or even kill them. This can happen very quickly.

Children aged 6 months to 4 ½ years are most at risk.

Which batteries are most dangerous?

Lithium coin cell batteries are slightly bigger than a 5 pence piece. They are big enough to get stuck and are strong enough to kill.

Smaller button batteries can still cause harm, especially if they are new.

Where are they?

Your child can find button batteries in things like:

- small remote controls
- car key fobs or key finders
- musical cards and books
- light-up toys and novelty items
- nightlights
- digital scales
- thermometers
- old toys in the toy box.

Children may also find spare batteries that are stored within reach or have fallen from the pack.

Even used 'flat' batteries still hold enough charge to be dangerous.

Check your home

- Hunt around your home for button batteries
- Keep products well out of your child's reach if the battery compartment isn't secured
- Store spare and 'flat' batteries well out of reach too
- Beware of bargains from online marketplaces or local discount shops. They may have button batteries your child can get to easily.

Has your child swallowed one?

- Don't delay. Take them straight to A&E or call 999 for an ambulance.
- Tell the doctor you think your child has swallowed a button battery.
- If you have the battery packaging or the product the battery came out of, take it with you.
- Don't let them eat or drink and don't make them sick
- There may be few symptoms. So trust your instincts.

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Fire safe families

"He ran upstairs and into a wall of black smoke and could feel intense heat coming through the walls."

Coroner's report, death of 5-year old who played with a lighter

You and your family are eight times more likely to die in a fire if you don't have a working smoke alarm. That's because, if a fire breaks out at night, you won't smell the smoke and wake up. Instead, the poisonous fumes will send you deeper into sleep.

So it makes sense to have a smoke alarm upstairs and downstairs, to save you from smoke that can kill in minutes, before you even wake up.

Prevent fires

- Cooking fires are the main cause of fires in the home – stay in the kitchen if children are cooking
- Keep matches, lighters and lit candles or tea-lights well out of reach of young children and teach children not to play with them
- Take care not to plug lots of chargers and equipment into an extension lead from one electrical socket - the socket will be dangerously overloaded
- Stay close by when you have fat heating and never pour water onto hot fat
- Store things like hair straighteners safely – avoid leaving them switched on or where a child might be able to switch them on
- Double check your cigarette is out and be careful smoking if you're really tired (or in bed) in case you fall asleep with it in your hand.

Check your smoke alarms

- You need a working smoke alarm upstairs and downstairs
- Test your alarms every month
- If you live in rented housing your landlord is responsible for providing alarms.

Plan your escape

- Work out your escape route in case of a fire and practice it with your family
- Keep the stairs and escape route clear of clutter at night
- Keep keys to any doors on your escape route in one place so you know where they are in an emergency.

Teach children what to do if they see a fire

- To tell someone straight away – a grown-up if possible
- Don't try to put the fire out yourself
- Get outside as quickly as possible. Don't try to hide from the fire
- Never go back inside for anything.

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Go dotty for safety!

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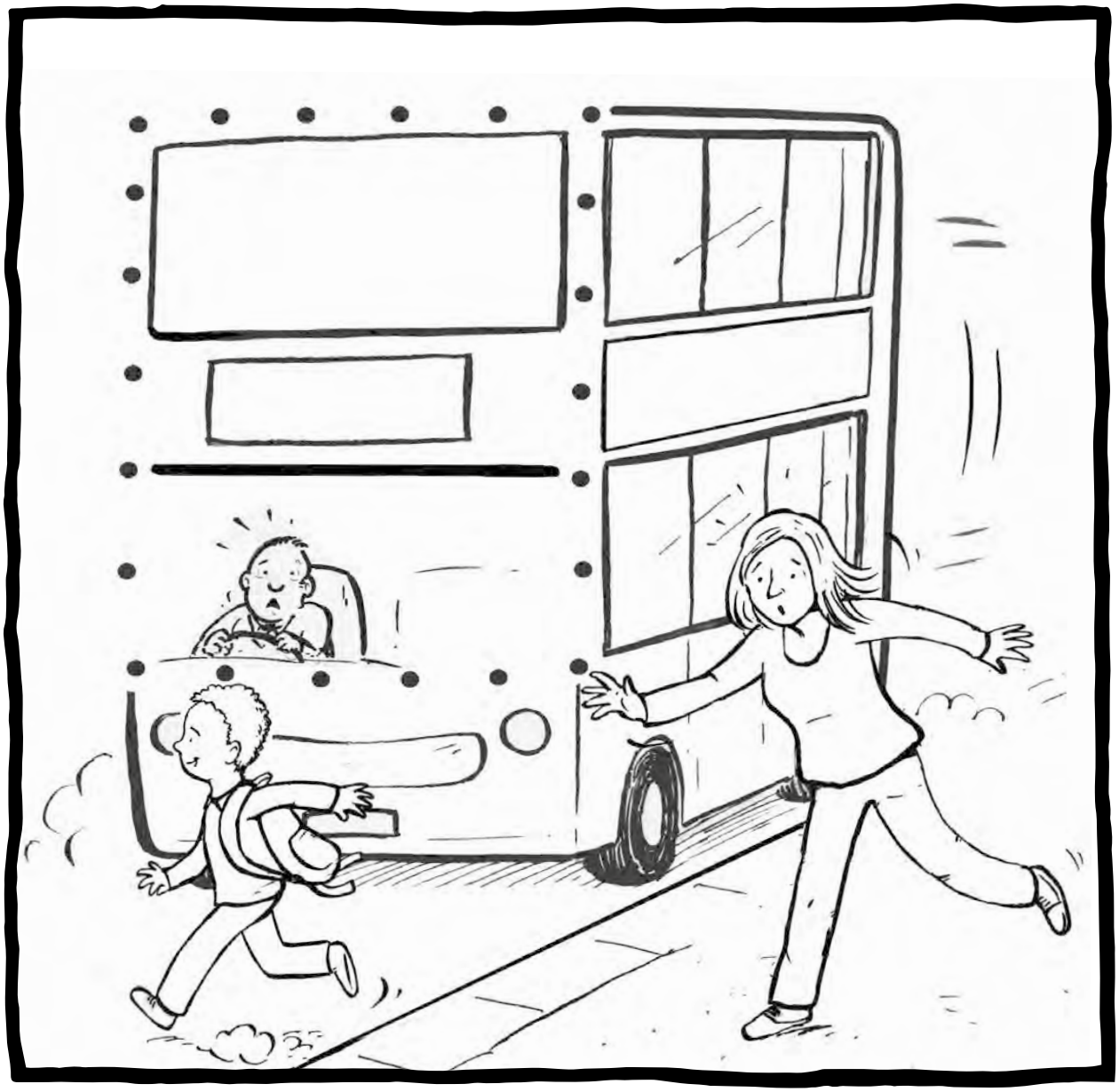
Join the dots to reveal the hidden danger in the picture.



1. What is the danger here?
2. How could the boy be safer around the road?
3. Colour in the picture if you like!

Child safety quiz

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1. **A baby's skin is:**
   a) twice as thin as an adult's
   b) 5 times thinner than an adult's
   c) 15 times thinner than an adult's

2. **How long can a hot drink still scald a child after it's made?**
   a) 15 minutes after it's been made
   b) 10 minutes after it's been made
   c) 5 minutes after it's been made

3. **How long can it take for a button battery to burn through a child's food pipe if they swallow one?**
   a) a week
   b) a day
   c) under two hours

4. **How many seconds can it take for a toddler to be badly burned by water from a bath hot tap?**
   a) 5
   b) 15
   c) 50

5. **Where are children most likely to be bitten by a dog:**
   a) at the park
   b) at home
   c) in the street

6. **Hair straighteners can get as hot as:**
   a) an iron
   b) a kettle of boiling water
   c) a milky mug of coffee

7. **At what age are children most likely to get run over:**
   a) 3 years old
   b) 6 years old
   c) 12 years old

8. **Children under 5 are most likely to have an accident:**
   a) at nursery
   b) on the road
   c) at home

9. **What foods are young children most likely to choke on?**
   a) Sausages
   b) Marshmallows
   c) Grapes

10. **How long does it take for a toddler to lose consciousness if they get tangled in a blind cord?**
    a) 20 seconds
    b) 2 minutes
    c) 20 minutes

Answers:

1. **c** – 15 times thinner than an adult's
2. **a** – 15 minutes after it's been made
3. **c** – under two hours
4. **a** – 5
5. **b** – at home
6. **a** – an iron
7. **c** – 12 years
8. **c** – at home
9. **all of them**
10. **a** – 20 seconds

Safety makes sense for children

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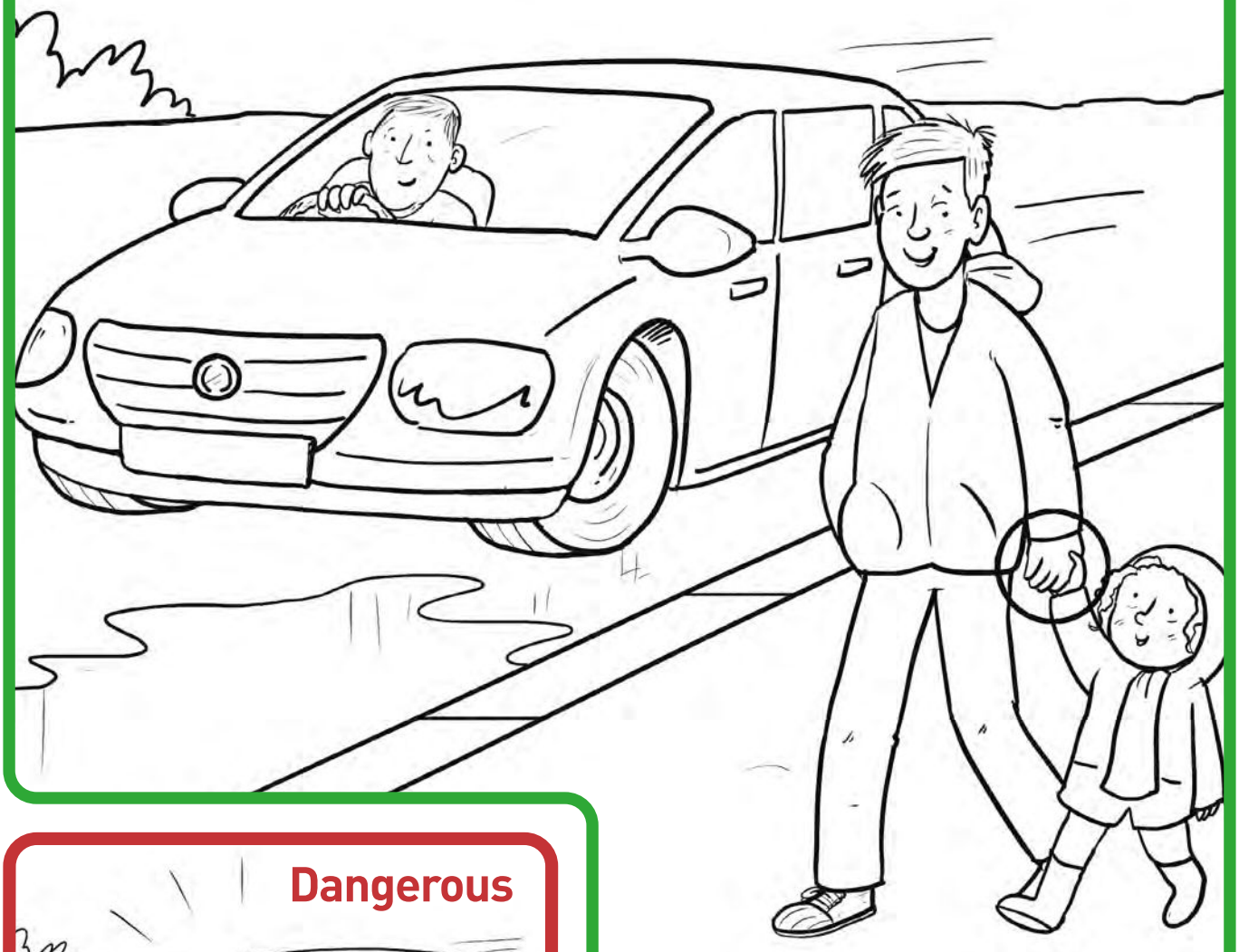
Safe



Dangerous

Safe at home wordsearch

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Can you spot the safe at home words hidden in this word search?

P	E	K	M	G	S	B	A	P	R	D	A	K	C
O	N	L	A	R	S	S	A	A	A	N	X	E	R
I	N	W	G	A	E	C	E	E	C	O	E	T	A
S	I	E	N	P	N	L	L	G	A	P	R	T	S
O	S	B	E	E	R	C	A	E	N	E	T	L	K
N	A	Y	T	S	A	I	N	G	A	L	I	E	N
I	T	L	S	R	H	N	I	S	O	R	B	C	I
N	E	T	A	G	Y	T	E	F	A	S	C	E	R
G	S	A	F	E	T	Y	C	A	P	S	G	O	D
P	A	I	N	K	I	L	L	E	R	S	S	K	T
F	N	O	S	D	R	O	C	D	N	I	L	B	O
S	W	O	D	N	I	W	N	E	P	O	A	L	H
K	N	A	P	P	Y	S	A	C	K	S	D	O	O
R	R	M	R	A	L	A	E	K	O	M	S	T	S

PAIN KILLERS
CLEAR COT
GRAPES
NAPPY SACKS
POND
BITREX
SAFETY CAPS
SMOKE ALARM
SAFETY GATE
HARNESS
BLIND CORDS
OPEN WINDOW
POISONING
HOT DRINKS
KETTLE
MAGNETS

A safer world for all children

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"All doctors dread breaking bad news: telling parents that their child requires emergency surgery or intensive care, or that resuscitation has been unsuccessful. When illness or death is the result of a preventable accident, the emotional toll is compounded by the avoidable nature of the tragedy."

Consultant paediatrician

We were set up 40 years ago by two doctors who could not bear to keep treating the same injuries day after day.

Despite their best efforts, they sometimes had to give the news that no parent ever wants to hear.

They knew that many children's deaths were needless and they became determined to prevent them.

We are still driven by that same passion to keep children safe.

Our charity works across the UK, sharing safety advice with parents, providing training to staff, and working with business and government to create a safer world for all our children.

Our donors make our work possible.
Every penny of your donation counts towards our work preventing death and life-changing injury to children.

Please donate what you can

"The button battery awareness leaflets will definitely raise a warning. I'm so thankful they were made. I just wish I'd received one earlier and my son would still be with us."

Mum of Hughie who died after swallowing a button battery

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