



FIREARMS

Firearm injuries and deaths have become a public health crisis. These tragedies are preventable.

Facts

- Firearm-related deaths are among the leading three causes of death in American children and youth.³
- 1 in 3 homes with children have guns, many unlocked and loaded. Three of every four children ages 5-14 know where these guns are located.⁴
- 80% of unintentional firearm deaths of children under 15 years occur in a home.⁴
- Adolescent suicide risk is strongly associated with firearm availability.¹ 82% of youth who died by firearm suicide used a gun owned by a family member.²

Tips for Prevention

The best preventive measure against firearm injuries and deaths among children is not to have a gun in the home. If you do choose to have firearms in your home, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends these safety rules:¹

- Never allow your child access to your gun(s). No matter how much instruction you may give him or her, children are not mature and responsible enough to handle a potentially lethal weapon.
- Never keep a loaded gun in the house or the car.
- Guns and ammunition should be locked away safely in separate locations in the house; make sure children don't have access to the keys.
- Guns should be equipped with trigger locks or cable locks.
- When using a gun for hunting or target practice, learn how to operate it before ever loading it.
- Never point the gun at another person, and keep the safety catch in place until you are ready to fire it.
- Before setting the gun down, always unload it.
- Never handle or use a firearm while consuming alcohol or taking drugs.



Even if you don't have guns in your own home, that won't eliminate your child's risks of being exposed to injury from a gun. Half of the homes in the United States contain firearms, and more than a third of all accidental shootings of children take place in the homes of their friends, neighbors, or relatives.¹ To prevent these injuries:

- Parents should ask about the presence of a loaded firearm in the homes where their children visit or play. Remember: Asking Saves Kids.
- For more information about how to start a conversation about firearm safety, see <http://askingsaveskids.org/>

Sources:

1. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Handguns-in-the-Home.aspx>
2. The Centers for Disease Control National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) 2002
3. American Academy of Pediatrics, Firearm-Related Injuries Affecting the Pediatric Population, Council on Injury, Violence, and Poison Prevention Executive Committee, October 18, 2012
4. <http://askingsaveskids.org/>

