

GUN SAFETY FOR CHILDREN



Why is gun safety important?

- More than 44 million Americans own firearms.
- Children have the ability to fire guns.
- Guns in the home are a serious risk to children because there is increased risk of an accidental or intentional injury.
- Suicide risk is five times more likely if there is a gun in the home.
- A gun kept in the home triples the risk of homicide.

What are the statistics relating to children and gun-related injuries?

- **1 out of 5 (21%) of injury deaths** for children age 1-19 were gun-related in 2010.
- In 2010, **2711 Americans under 20 died** of a gun injury.
- Compared to other countries, American children are **10 times more likely** to die of a gun suicide and **9 times more likely** to die of an accidental gun injury.

How safely do people with children store their guns?

- Only 39% of parents with a gun keep it locked, unloaded and separate from ammunition.

What do we know about guns and teen suicide?

- Suicide attempts involving a gun often are fatal.
- Teens in homes with guns are at a much higher risk for suicide.
- Most guns involved in a suicide come from the victim's home or a relative or friend's home.

How can I keep my child safe from gun injury?

- According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the best way to keep your child or teen safe from gun

injury or death is to **never** have a gun in your home, especially not a handgun.

- Find out if there are guns present and how they are stored at homes where your children play
- If your friends or family keep a firearm, urge them to keep it locked and unloaded.

Only 39% of parents with a gun keep it locked



For those who know the dangers of guns but still keep one in the home, how can it be safely stored?

- **Always** keep the gun unloaded and locked up.
- Lock and store the bullets in a **separate place**.
- Make sure to **hide the keys** to the locked boxes.
- Keep both the locked gun and ammunition boxes out of the reach of children.
- Do not keep a loaded gun next to your bed.

What should I tell my child to do if he or she sees a gun?

- Do not touch the gun.
- Walk away from the gun.
- Tell an adult as soon as possible.

If I have a gun, where can I get a free gun lock?

- If you call **314.454.KIDS (5437)**, you can make a free appointment with the SLCH Safety Stop and **receive a free gun lock**.

A recent WUPAARC survey of over 1,200 parents addressed *Parental Opinions and Practices Concerning Firearm Safety in the Home*. Most parents indicated the following information about firearm safety would be helpful:

<p>When should I discuss firearms with my child?</p>	<p>It is important to get children thinking about gun safety as early as pre-school. Most children are strong enough to pull a trigger around 3 years old and are mature enough to understand the conversation.</p> <p>Repetition is key. Every month or two is not too often when the child is younger. Reinforce your conversation regularly, adding detail and context as your children get older.</p> <p>The gun is the responsibility of the owner at all times. Children are inherently curious and you cannot rely on them to always follow your wishes. With that in mind, keep firearms out of reach of children.</p>
<p>How do I discuss firearms with my child?</p> <p>Answer adapted from an excellent video found at: www.projectchildsafe.org</p>	<p>For young children, the safety messages are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you see a gun, STOP. • Don't touch it. • Even if a gun looks like a toy, leave it alone. • Leave the area – go tell an adult. <p><u>Additional Aspects:</u> Children need to know what to do if they come across a gun with no adult present. Make sure you and your partner are on the same page about gun safety before you have the discussion with your child. Minimize distractions by turning off cell phones and the TV to emphasize that this is a serious discussion.</p>
<p>How do I discuss firearms with my child?</p> <p>Answer adapted from an excellent video found at: www.projectchildsafe.org</p>	<p>For teenagers, the safety messages are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't touch, pick up or use a gun without an adult's permission and supervision. • Never, ever point a gun at anyone. • Always assume a gun is loaded and can fire. <p>If you own a gun, set an example of safe handling and storage.</p> <p><u>Additional Aspects:</u> Every teenager needs to be advised on gun safety; however it should be more of a conversation than a lecture. Explain the reasons why each aspect of gun safety is important. Talk about how to handle potential situations involving guns to help your teen know what to do when you are not around. For example, "A friend wants to shoot cans with their father's handgun without asking permission. What do you say to them?"</p>
<p>How do I discuss firearms with my child's friend's parents?</p>	<p>Work "<i>Is there an unlocked gun in your house?</i>" into normal conversations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Playdate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does your child have any allergies or dietary restrictions? ○ Do you have an extra car seat or do I need to leave mine? ○ Is there an unlocked gun in your house? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>"(Child's name) is very curious. I just want to be sure he can't get into too much trouble."</i> • Other Interactions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>"I just read an article about gun safety and I thought it might be a good idea to ask..."</i> <p><u>Additional Aspects:</u> Emphasize safe storage not ownership. Discuss your own home. You are simply trying to make sure your child is in a safe environment.</p>