

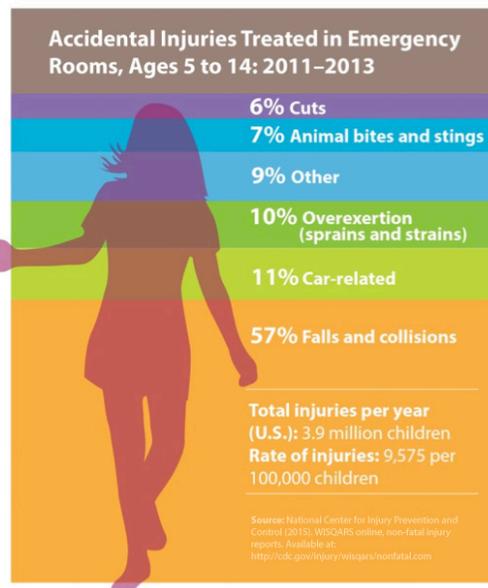


# Safety Tips for Dads To Keep School-Age Kids Safe

(Ages 5 to 14 Years)

Accidents happen to everyone, but there are things we can do to make them happen less often and be less dangerous. To keep children safe, the first step is to know how they are most likely to get hurt. Drawing on data from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control,<sup>1</sup> this guide gives information about the kinds of accidents that are the most common and the most dangerous for **children between the ages of 5 and 14**, and then offers suggestions about what dads can do to help avoid these accidents.

Most children do not get seriously hurt, but it is important to know what dangers they face. Sometimes, parents worry about the dangers that grab the headlines, but those usually are not what hurt the most children.



<sup>1</sup>National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2015). WISQARS online reports. Available at: <http://cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/>

**Children between the ages of 5 and 14 have fewer deaths from accidents than children of other ages.** They are old enough to know how to do many things safely on their own, and they are usually not doing things that cause injuries to older teens, such as drinking alcohol, doing drugs, or driving cars. However, they are spending more time on their own than children under the age of 5, so parents and caregivers need to teach them how to avoid danger.

**Accidental injuries from falling or running into something, like a fence, are the most common reasons children ages 5 to 14 end**

**up in the emergency room.** Children at this age can also end up in the hospital because of “overexertion,” which includes sprains and muscle strains. Mostly, children get these injuries playing sports. Animal bites and insect stings are another major cause of hospital visits.

**While accidental deaths are very rare at this age, most happen because of car crashes, including when the child is on foot or riding a bike, and drowning.** However, compared to younger children (toddlers and preschoolers), car-related injuries are more common for school-age children.

## TIPS FOR AVOIDING SERIOUS INJURIES TO SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

1. **Children should always wear protective gear (helmets, pads, etc.) when playing sports, riding bicycles, or skating.** The equipment should be in good condition and fit well or it will not give them much protection.
2. **Help children learn and practice the right way to participate in sports.** For instance, they should warm up by running before playing a game of basketball, and know the right way to pitch a baseball. Children should always wear appropriate padding, helmets, and other protective garments. These types of skills will help them avoid serious injuries from overexertion.
3. **Do not let children play in the street.** When children play in the street, drivers may not always see them and they may be hit. An adult should always be

outside with younger children when they play near streets. Take turns with other parents and neighbors if you cannot be outside the whole time. For older children, make sure they know not to run into the street without looking. If a ball goes into the street, they should wait until it stops before carefully going after it.

4. **Teach kids how to ride their bikes safely.** Riding their bikes is often quite fun, but children younger than 10 should ride on the sidewalk, not the street, as much as possible. Neon, fluorescent colors, or reflective tape on clothes and bikes lets drivers see and avoid children who are riding bikes in the street or crossing at intersections. Make certain that children wear their knee and elbow pads and their helmet and stay where you can see them.

5. **Always wear a seat belt when in a car, and drive safely and carefully.** It is never too early to show children the right way to do things (and being a good role model keeps you safer, too). When they are old enough, children will be happy to be out of the car seat, but they should be secured safely in their seat by seat belts.
6. **Younger school-age children need to be in car seats or booster seats when they are in cars.** When riding in cars, children should be in car seats or booster seats until they are big enough to wear a seat belt by themselves. Different states have different laws about this, but in general, children can use a seat belt without a car seat or booster seat when the belt fits well, which is usually when children reach a height of 57 inches. This means that the lap belt stays on the thighs, not the belly, and the shoulder belt stays on the shoulder and chest, and not the neck or face. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration strongly recommends that children 12 and under always ride in the back seat. Make sure you are using the right type of seat for your child's size. In many areas, there are local organizations that provide free or low-cost car seats, and others that can help you install them correctly.
7. **Make your home safe from fires.** Heaters and stoves should not have things like cloth or paper near them, and you should only use them when someone is in the room and awake. Never smoke in bed. Check smoke alarms often to make sure that they have fresh batteries and they work, and make sure kids recognize the sound of the alarm and know where to go if there is a fire. Property owners are required by law to put smoke alarms in their rental properties in most states. You can also call your local fire station or American Red Cross to find out where to get free smoke alarms for your home.
8. **Take precaution against accidental poisoning.** Carbon monoxide and lead poisoning can be deadly, but they are preventable. Carbon monoxide is odorless and colorless. Without a detector, people often do not know when they are at risk of being poisoned. Carbon monoxide poisoning happens most often in enclosed spaces, such as houses, and when appliances like stoves, ovens, or other gas-operated devices leak. Detectors are often available through local fire departments and are cheap and easy to install without professional help. Make sure to change the batteries every 6 months. Lead poisoning occurs when you breathe or swallow something with lead in it, and is most common in older houses that have old paint or pipes. Other sources of lead poisoning can include toys or candy, especially if they are made in other countries where regulations are less strict than in the U.S. Removing leaded products from the home can be costly, but some areas provide free lead testing and removal services for families that qualify.
9. **Teach children to avoid animals they do not know and treat all animals carefully.** Even well-trained pets can bite when they are frightened or injured. Children should know not to tease or grab at pets and not bother them when they are sleeping or eating.
10. **Children should learn to swim as early as possible.** Local recreation centers, such as the YMCA or Boys and Girls Club, may have free or low-cost lessons. Even if children know how to swim, they should only swim in places where a lifeguard or adult who knows how to swim watches them carefully.

## More Information

**Bicycle safety tips:**<http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/KidsandBikeSafetyWeb>

**Carbon monoxide FAQs:**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/co/faqs.htm>

**Carbon monoxide safety:**  
[http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA\\_CustomProductCatalog/m4340092\\_FireCOFactSheet.pdf](http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4340092_FireCOFactSheet.pdf)

**Child passenger safety:**  
[http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/child\\_passenger\\_safety/cps-factsheet.html](http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/child_passenger_safety/cps-factsheet.html)

**Finding car seat inspection stations:**<http://www.safercar.gov/cpsApp/cps/index.htm>

**Finding the right size car seat:**  
<http://www.safercar.gov/parents/CarSeats/Right-Car-Seat-Age-Size.htm>

**Free or low-cost car seats:**  
<http://buckleupforlife.org/about-our-program>

**Home fire safety:**<http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/home-fire>

**Installing car seats:**<http://www.safercar.gov/parents/CarSeats/How-To-Install-Car-Seats.htm#>

**Installing car seats (videos):**  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/thecarseatlady1>

**Lead safety:**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/infographic.htm>

**More on risks and dangers:**  
<http://www.worryclock.com>

**Preventing animal bites:**  
<https://www.aspcare.org/pet-care/dog-care/dog-bite-prevention>

**Preventing bee stings:**  
<http://www.drgreene.com/tips-avoiding-bees-preventing-bee-stings>

**Preventing drowning:**  
<http://ndpa.org/resources/safety-tips/layers-of-protection>

**Preventing sports injuries:**  
[http://www.cdc.gov/safechild/Sports\\_Injuries/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/safechild/Sports_Injuries/index.html)

**Seat belt tips:**  
<http://www.safekids.org/tip/seat-belt-safety-tips-pdf>

**Staying safe around animals:**  
<http://kidshealth.org/kid/watch/house/animals.html#>

