

# Safety Tips:



Lucile Packard  
Children's Hospital  
Stanford

Childhood Injury Prevention

## Natural disasters (All Ages)

### Fire

- Make sure your smoke alarms are working properly. Install smoke alarms on every level of your home. Try to use smoke alarms with 10-year batteries.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn, and always blow them out when you leave the room or before you go to sleep. Do not allow kids to use candles in their bedrooms.
- Limit distractions when cooking and do not leave a hot oven or stovetop unattended.
- Have a fire extinguisher in the kitchen in case of emergency, and make sure you know how it works.
- Practice feeling the door, doorknob and cracks around the door with the back of your hand to see if they are too hot with your family. In case of a real fire, this will be an important skill.
- Have your family plan and practice a home fire escape plan with two paths out of your house in case of a fire. It is important to have an alternate exit in case one is blocked by fire.
- Choose a place to meet outside that is a safe distance away from your home in case of a fire.
- If you cannot safely escape your home or apartment in a fire, keep smoke out of the room by covering vents and cracks around the door and call 911 or your fire department as quickly as possible. Then signal for help at the window with a light-colored cloth or a flashlight.

### Earthquake

- Build an emergency kit filled with basic items you would need during an emergency.
- Make a family communication plan including a contact card for each member of the family, an out-of-state emergency contact, and plans in case certain forms of communication do not work during the emergency.
- Securely fasten shelves to walls.
- Place large or heavy objects on lower shelves.
- Store breakable items such as bottled foods, glass, and china as well as store weed killers, pesticides, and flammable products in low, closed cabinets with latches.
- Fasten heavy items such as pictures and mirrors securely to walls and away from beds and couches.
- Brace overhead light fixtures and top heavy objects.
- Repair defective electrical wiring and leaky gas connections with appropriate professional help. These are potential fire risks.
- Install flexible pipe fittings to avoid gas or water leaks. Flexible fittings are more resistant to breakage.
- Secure your water heater, refrigerator, furnace and gas appliances by strapping them to the wall studs and bolting to the floor. If recommended by your gas company, have an automatic gas shut-off valve installed that is triggered by strong vibrations.
- Repair any deep cracks in ceilings or foundations. Get expert advice if there are signs of structural defects.
- Be sure your home is firmly anchored to its foundation.
- Locate safe spots in each room under a sturdy table or against an inside wall. Reinforce this information by moving to these places during each drill.
- Hold earthquake drills with your family members: Drop, cover and hold on.