

Make Your Home Safe for Your Child

Extra steps for safety

Parents and caregivers want to make their homes safe for their children. If children or teens experience mental health crisis, parents and caregivers must take extra steps to keep their homes as safe as possible. While you can't remove every risk, taking the steps below can greatly lower the chances of suicide, self-harm or violence. The American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry recommends these actions.



For crisis or emergency, call 911.



Sources of risk in the home

There are many items in a home that can be harmful if misused.

1. Keep unsafe items in lockboxes and safes only adults can access.
2. Be sure to keep the safe keys, combinations or access codes in a secure place away from children.
3. If your child will be visiting another home, ask about safety steps.



Weapons

- Keep all firearms unloaded and locked in a safe. Lock ammunition in a separate safe.
- Store keys and access codes for safes in a secure place from children and teens.
- Use trigger locks on firearms.
- If your child will be visiting another home, ask the parents about gun ownership and storage.
- Lock away sharp objects like knives and razor blades.
- Never allow someone in a mental health crisis to handle a firearm, even if you are supervising.



Medications

Parents and caregivers are responsible for all medications in the home.

- Lock all prescription and over-the-counter medications in a secure box.
- Only adults should give medications to children or teens.



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- Keep track of all medication bottles, including those for pets. Count the pills in each container. This includes prescribed and over-the-counter medications, like pain relief, allergy pills, vitamins and supplements.
- Get rid of expired or unused medications at local disposal sites. Find locations here: [DEA Drug Disposal](http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/drug-disposal.html). www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/drug-disposal.html



Alcohol, marijuana and other substances

- Track alcohol bottles and lock them up. Simply putting them out of reach is not enough.
- Store all types of marijuana or other substances in a locked box that only adults can access.
- Talk to other parents about how they store alcohol and marijuana.



Other household risks

- Keep vehicle keys with you or locked away.
- Lock up toxic cleaners, pesticides and chemicals.
- Remove or lock away items like ropes, electrical cords and long wires.
- Secure high windows and block access to rooftops.



Internet and technology

- Parents and caregivers should monitor the online activities of their children. Watch for:
 - Research on methods of self-harm or suicide.
 - Buying items that could be used for self-harm.
 - Visiting chatrooms or social media sites about self-harm or suicide.
 - Text or direct messages about suicide, calls for help, or bullying.



Where to get safety products

You can find many types of locking storage items to help secure harmful objects in your home. The Tom Sargent Safety Center at OHSU Doernbecher Children's Hospital offers education and home safety products for medications, firearms and more. Contact 503-418-4666 or safety@ohsu.edu.

