



# Safety for Your Child: 8 Years



Did you know that injuries are the greatest threat to the life and health of your child? Injuries are the cause of death of school-aged children. Yet you can prevent most injuries!

At age 8, children are now taking off on their own. They look to friends for approval. They try to do daring things. They may not want to obey grown-up rules. But your child can learn safety rules with your help and reminders. Your child now goes out more without you and could drown, be hurt on a bike, or be hit by a car. And your child still can be hurt or killed while riding in a car if he is not buckled by a seat belt.

## Sports Safety

Ask your doctor which sports are right for your child. Be sure your child wears all the protective equipment made for the sport, such as shin pads, mouth guards, wrist guards, eye protection, or helmets. Your child's coach also should be able to help you select protective equipment.

## Water Safety

At this age, your child is not safe alone in water, even if he or she knows how to swim. Do not let your child play around any water (lake, stream, pool, or ocean) unless an adult is watching. Never let your child swim in canals or any fast-moving water. Teach your child to always enter the water feet first.

## And Remember Bike Safety

Make sure your child always wears a helmet while riding a bike. Now is the time to teach your child "Rules of the Road." Be sure he or she knows the rules and can use them. Watch your child ride. See if he or she is in control of the bike. See if your child uses good judgment. Your 8-year-old is not old enough to ride at dusk or after dark. Make sure your child brings the bike in when the sun starts to set.

## Car Safety

NEVER start the car until you've checked to be sure that your child is properly restrained in a booster seat. Your child should use a booster seat until the lap belt can be worn low and flat on the hips and the shoulder belt can be worn across the shoulder rather than the face or neck (usually at about 80 pounds and about 4 feet 9 inches tall). Be sure that you and all others in the car are buckled up, too. Install shoulder belts in the back seat of your car if they are not already there. Serious injuries can occur with lap belts alone. The safest place for all children to ride is in the back seat.

# Firearm Hazards

**It is best to keep all guns out of your home. If you choose to keep a gun, store it unloaded and in a locked place, separate from ammunition. Ask if the homes where your child visits or is cared for have guns and how they are stored. Your child is at greater risk of being shot by himself, his friends, or a family member than of being injured by an intruder.**