

Covid-19, containment and accidents in children's domestic life

Press release from the National Academy of Medicine

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Accidents in the child's domestic life occur at home or in its immediate surroundings (garden, yard, garage). They occur in 84% of cases in children before the age of one year, 75% between one and two years old, still very frequent (more than 50%) up to the age of 5 years and decrease in the older children in favour of outside accidents (school, sport). These include poisoning, burns, suffocation by foreign bodies, falls, drowning and defenestration. They are frequent and sometimes very serious. Since the implementation of containment measures due to the Covid-19 outbreak, emergency services, firefighters and the media report an increase in these accidents.

The confined lifestyle increases the risk of domestic accidents.

Containment changes the lives of families. Children must be supervised continuously over 24 hours (no nursery, no school), single parent families being more at risk. Teleworking at home distracts parents' attention. By developing their autonomy, children from 1 to 4 years old try to escape their supervision. Confinement encourages exploration, which will be all the more dangerous if parents are not vigilant. In addition to the common risks of burns, drowning and electrocution, there are also the dangers of antiseptic solutions, disinfectants and medications left within the reach of the youngest children.

The National Academy of Medicine reminds us of the basic precautions to be reinforced during periods of confinement:

- **Maintain constant supervision by an adult**, never by another child. It must be ensured that children between 1 and 6 years of age who are awake and mobile never remain alone, especially when parents are absorbed by teleworking;
- **Make dangerous products and medicines inaccessible**, at height and, if necessary, under lock and key: household products, bleach, all medicines, especially paracetamol, and hydro-alcoholic solutions;
- **Avoid false routes**: peanuts for appetizers, dangerous toys, . . . ;
- **Avoid burns** by keeping children away from cooking plates and heating equipment (oven, microwave, iron, etc...);
- **Avoid electrocution** by using plug covers and by keeping cables and multiple sockets out of reach;

- **Prevent falls** by always standing next to the changing table, by securing high chairs, by installing a barrier for interior stairs;
- **Avoid drowning** by never leaving a child under 3 years old alone in the bath;
- **Avoid defenestration** by never leaving a child alone at a window or on a balcony, and by removing any object that would allow the child to climb up to have a better view.