

Childproofing by fear mongers

A childproofing and child safety expert will give you much to consider when building a nest for your newborn, but they often exaggerate how commonplace it is for household items to hurt or kill babies. After having our first baby, my spouse signed me up for one of those infant CPR and infant safety classes offered for free at our pediatrician's office. Our Doctor outsourced the class to someone who specializes in scaring the pants off new parents, a woman with five kids of her own and a preferred client card at Lutheran Hospital.

She started the Saturday morning seminar with a warm welcome to everyone in the room, each of us introducing ourselves and admitting it was our first baby. There were six other parents in the room, and we had that happy *first-time-parents* look that sees nothing but rainbows and unicorns. We all had kids born recently and had conquered the labor part and most of the women had mastered nursing. Nonetheless, I'd heard about bigger challenges – babies that stopped breathing for no reason! A friend's friend's friend had to save his baby's life with CPR.

The teacher smiled around the circle and began riddling us with frightening facts. "What do buttons have to do with grapes? They both kill more children because of choking than any other household item. And that bathtub with two inches of water in it will kill your baby in a minute."

The teacher went over basic infant CPR and also the heimlich maneuver. But what I remember best is her childproofing checklist on the more obscure safety necessities around the house:

- Don't drink coffee while strolling
- Close the toilet lid
- Don't use blankets in the crib
- Anchor all furniture against the wall
- Don't use stickers anywhere
- Childproof cabinets and Doors

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