

# Guns In The Home? Consider The Risks

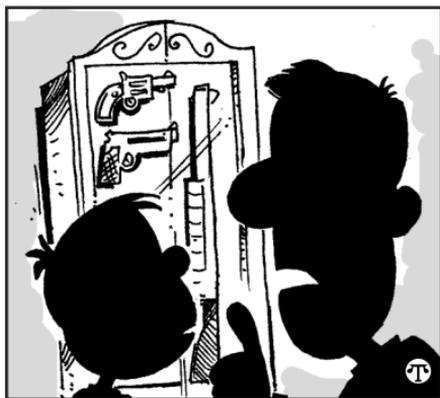
(NAPSA)—Approximately 40 percent of homes in the United States contain one or more firearms. If not handled and stored carefully, they can cause serious injury or kill a member of the household. In fact, having a gun in your home increases the odds that you will die from a gunshot wound, compared to people who do not keep guns in their home, according to a study in the June 2003 *Annals of Emergency Medicine*.

Approximately 1,500 children, ages 14 and under, are treated annually in hospital emergency rooms for unintentional firearm-related injuries. Most unintentional firearm-related deaths among children occur in or around a home; half of these shootings occur at the home of the victim, and about 40 percent at the home of a friend or relative.

The American College of Emergency Physicians strongly urges families to carefully consider their reasons for keeping a firearm, especially a handgun, in the home. If you choose to keep a gun in your home, ACEP suggests you consider one with proper safety features such as a loaded chamber indicator, a grip safety, a magazine safety and a drop safety (firing pin block).

“Unfortunately, it is very difficult to find handguns that incorporate several safety devices,” said Dr. Arthur Kellermann, of the American College of Emergency Physicians. “Many handguns sold or imported into the United States lack basic safety features. If we can design safer cars and sell child-resistant aspirin bottles, we should be able to design and sell safer handguns. It’s a matter of common sense.”

When a gun is kept in the



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home, ACEP recommends you take the following precautions:

- Complete an educational program on gun safety, such as the program offered by the National Safety Council.
- If you own firearms, carefully consider where you keep them.
- When storing a gun, make sure it is placed unloaded in a secure lockbox or gun safe.
- Store ammunition in a different place than where the gun is stored.
- If you don't own a lock box, keep a gunlock on the gun.
- Never handle a gun when under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Teach children never to touch a firearm and to immediately tell an adult if they find a gun.
- Know where your firearms are at all times.

“Guns are the second leading cause of fatal injury in the U.S.,” said Dr. Kellermann. “The toll of firearm injuries extends well beyond the victims themselves, to their families, and to society, which pays the high costs associated with these tragedies.”

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