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# Radio Service

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, March 30, 1933.

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★ MAR 15 1933 ★  
U. S. Department of Agriculture

Subject: "Safety at Home." Information from the National Safety Council approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A. Other information from Bureaus of Chemistry & Soils, and Agricultural Engineering, U.S.D.A.

--ooOoo--

Instead of our usual talk about saving on food and clothes and other household items this morning, we're going to discuss another kind of saving today -- saving people. That may sound like an unusual job for the housekeeper. But she can do more than anyone else for the safety of her home by preventing home accidents. An appalling number of these occur every year. I haven't the latest figures but I have those for the year 1929. During that year, 23,000 people were killed and nearly three million were injured in home accidents alone. Long ago law makers and factory owners began to consider the problem of safety for workers, and ever since they have done a great deal to prevent accidents in industry. Only recently has anyone begun to take an interest in the large number of people who are killed or injured in home accidents.

If we women are to make our homes safe, we need to know how and why these home accidents happen. According to the figures, more accidents come from falls than anything else. Next, in frequency, come burns, scalds and explosions. Then, asphyxiation and suffocation. Then, poisons. And finally, cuts and scratches.

These falls that total such a high per cent of trouble occur most frequently on stairs. Slippery floors and rugs cause many of them. And so do slippery bathtubs. Many tumbles, serious and otherwise, are the result of standing on something unsteady. For example, to reach that jar of preserves on the top shelf, you step up on a chair or a box nearby. The chair is shaky. And far too many times it tips and slides out from under you.

"Why that's just a common everyday event," you say. Unfortunately, it's all too common. Just have a look at the records of accidents caused by such everyday doings.

Now let's consider some safety measures to prevent these common sources of accidents. About the floors and rugs causing falls. First, don't put too much wax on your floors. That's a frequent mistake. Use just enough wax to finish the floor, but not enough to make that extra slippery layer on top. Too much wax is wasteful and collects dirt easily besides being dangerous. Use non-skid material under your rugs or attach non-skid devices to them. A friend of mine cut small triangles of rubber from an old inner tube and sewed these under the corners of her rugs. They made very successful non-skid devices and cost her nothing. See that the man of the house keeps all steps and stairs in good repair -- no shaky boards and no loose nails. Cellar and attic stairs often cause trouble because they are in the dark. Some people paint the lowest cellar step white as a safety measure. Others cover it with carpet so that if you can't see that it's the lowest step, you can at least feel it. If you have no light on such stairs, keep a flashlight on a handy shelf at the entrance to use in going up and down.



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As for this matter of reaching a high shelf or attaching a cord to the picture molding or any other reaching job, rely on a safe, firm, sturdy step-ladder to stand on rather than a shaky chair or table. Every home needs a small step ladder for such purposes. And most kitchens are more convenient with a step-stool. The home carpenter, whether he is the young son of the family or his father, can easily build some safe, steady, step-up device like this.

We've discussed preventing home fires before. Much that we said applies to burns, scalds, explosions and similar injuries. These result from a big accident like a fire in the home and from such a small accident as a pot of boiling coffee tipped over by a curious youngster.

Ask the firemen about the causes of fires in homes. They'll tell you that many a home has gone to ashes because of a lot of rubbish accumulated in the cellar.

"Now, John, be sure to save all that good excelsior and packing paper in those barrels. We'll find it handy to have next time we move."

That may sound like economy, but if John is wise, he'll persuade his wife to throw it out just the same. That quantity of inflammable material is too dangerous to have around. So is rubbish of all kinds -- papers, soiled or oily or paint rags, and so forth. Get rid of all rubbish. Tidiness aids safety.

Many of the most terrible accidents have come from cleaning in a room where the gasoline fumes came in contact with a spark of some sort and caused an explosion. Safe cleaning fluids are on the market today. If you are cleaning clothes at home or upholstered furniture or floors or anything else, use non-inflammable cleaning materials. Don't risk your life or anyone else's by using gasoline or benzine. While we're mentioning the subject, let's remember also that starting or reviving a fire by using gasoline or kerosene has been the cause of many deaths.

Keep a sharp eye on your heating and cooking appliances. Leaky or old gas tubing always is a hazard. In fact, neglecting even the slightest leaks in gas lines is dangerous. Any room where you have a fire of any kind needs ventilation. But be sure the gas range or heater is never in a direct draft. A breeze may blow out the flame, especially if it's turned low, and then the gas will escape into the room.

The fourth most frequent cause of home deaths from accidents is poison. Most of the accidents are from medicines, cleaning fluids and so forth, left where children can reach them. Think of this! Forty per cent of the deaths from poisoning happen to children under fifteen. That's why it's wise to keep no poisonous substances in your house at all, if you can help it. If you do have some, keep them well out of reach of the children. And have the bottles well labeled so the adults in the family won't use them by mistake. A pin thrust through the cork will warn anyone who is likely to take medicine in the dark.

Tomorrow: "How to Cook Fish to Conserve Food Value."

