



Whitman County
Public Health

SAFE KIDS
SAFE HOME

A central image of a baby crawling on its hands and knees, smiling broadly. The baby is surrounded by a green, sunburst-like glow.

**CHILDPROOF WHAT'S
UNDER YOUR ROOF.**

GROWING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY



BABYPROOFING CHECKLIST

BEFORE BABY COMES HOME

Baby may not be crawling yet, but she could still encounter some hazards. Learn how to babyproof room by room with our ultimate babyproofing checklist.

When it's time to bring your newborn home, you want to be sure the house is safely set up to receive him—and the best time for babyproofing your home is long before he arrives.

Ideally, start at least three months before your due date because some of the recommended babyproofing preparations may take time.

Once baby starts to crawl (around 6 to 10 months), you'll need to do a second babyproofing sweep to ensure the house is safe for a baby on the move.

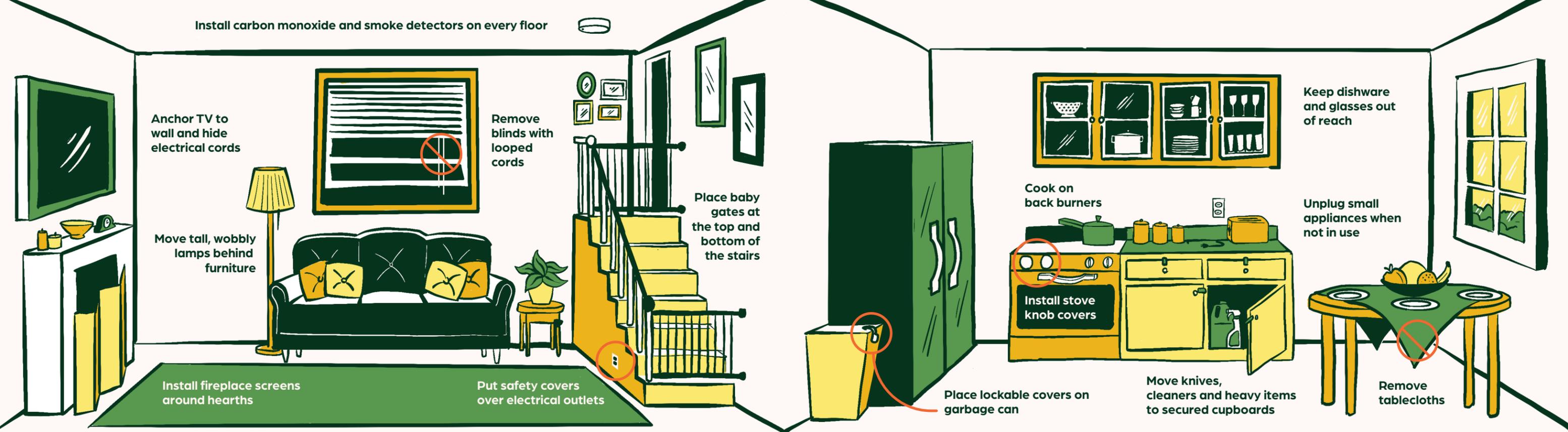
For a roundup of those big to-dos, check out [The Bump baby proofing checklist](#) for when baby is on the move.

In this article:

[Babyproofing the house](#)

[Babyproofing the car](#)





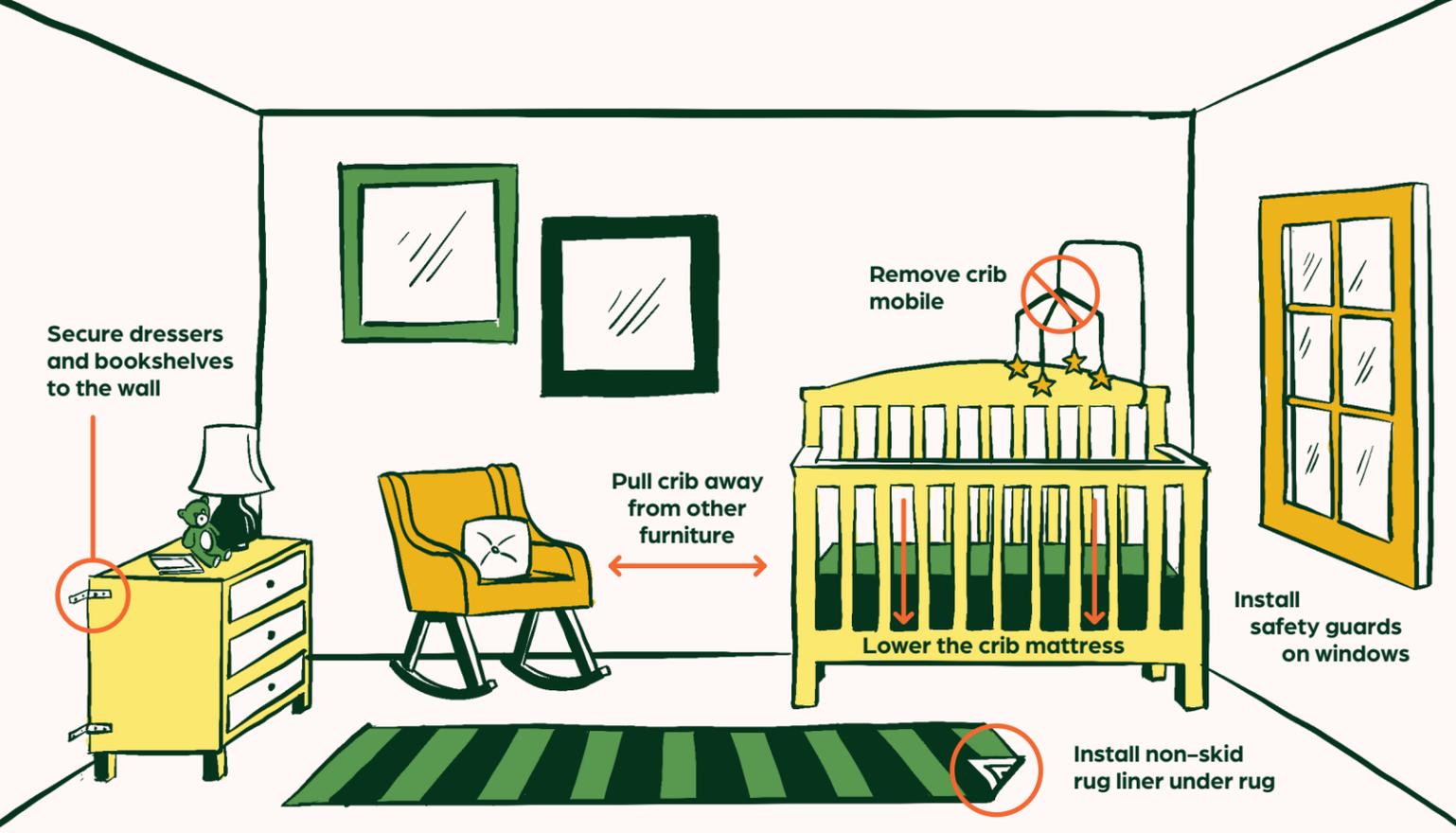
THE LIVING ROOM

BABYPROOFING AROUND THE HOUSE

- Install a **UL Listed** carbon monoxide detector on every story of your house if you use gas or oil appliances or have an attached garage. Check the batteries of any detectors you already have
- Install smoke detectors on every level of your home and in the hallways outside of bedrooms.
- Purchase a fire extinguisher and **learn how to use it.**
- Stock your medicine cabinet or **first-aid kit.**
- Add emergency contacts and **medical information** to your phone that can be **accessed even in lock mode.**
- Have at least one phone in your home that's connected by landline. Cordless phones don't work when the power is out, and cell phone batteries can run out. Place a list of emergency numbers near the land line.
- Make sure your home or apartment number is easy to see so fire or rescue can locate you quickly in an emergency.
- Install a temperature guard on your water heater at a maximum of 120 degrees Fahrenheit (48 degrees Celsius).

THE KITCHEN

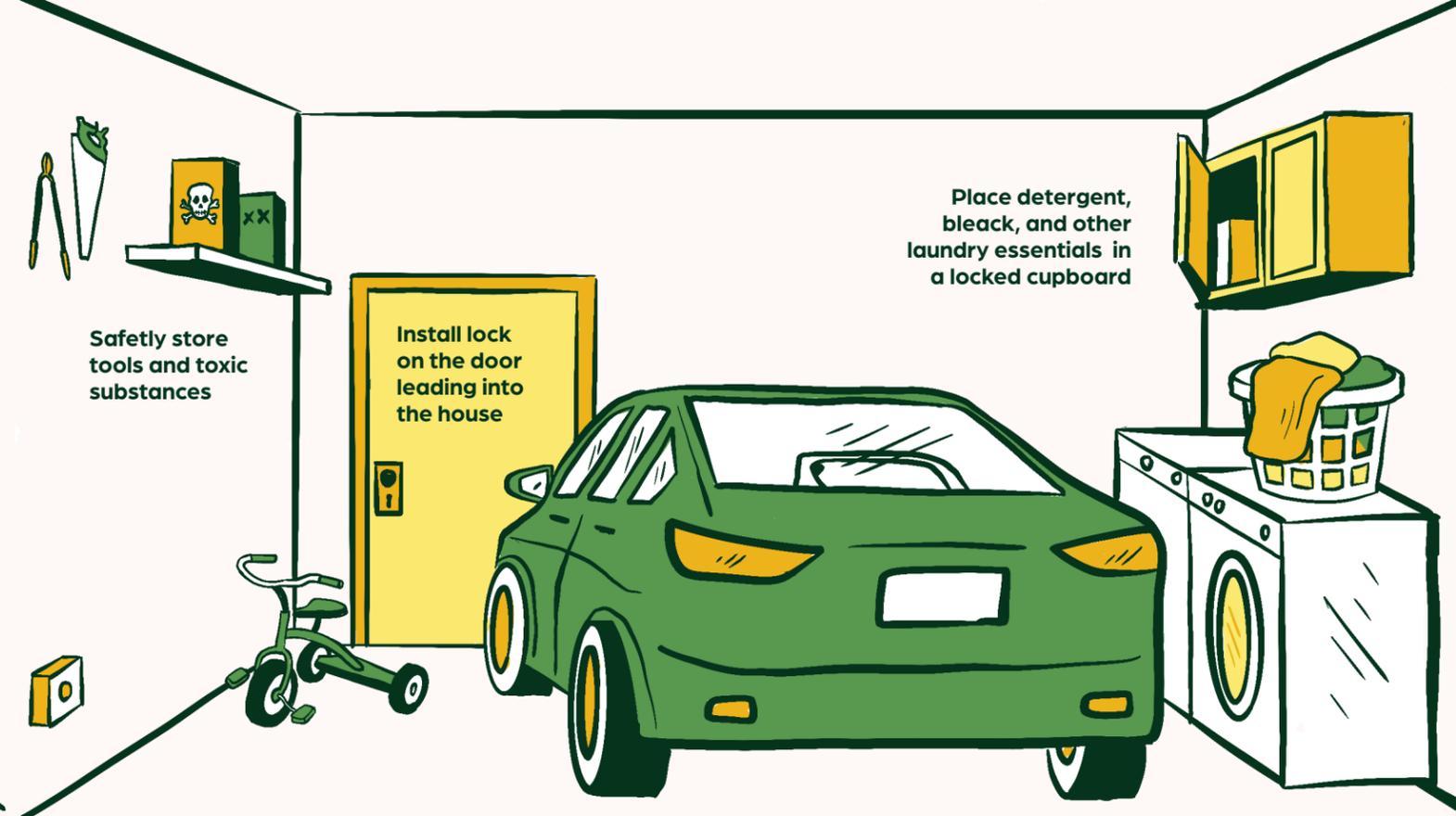
- Get any flaking or peeling paint sealed or removed by a professional, especially if your home was built before 1978. Dust from lead paint, banned from residential use in that year, can be harmful if ingested.
- Put non-slip pads under all rugs.
- Cover all sharp furniture edges and corners with bumpers or safety padding.
- Block all open outlets with furniture or use safety plugs.
- Latch closed any drawers, doors, or cupboards within baby's reach.
- Remove any blinds or curtains with looped cords, or install safety tassels and cord stops to tuck away the cords.
- Always unplug and store electric appliances that aren't used (iron, curling iron, etc.)
- Check the house and yard for poisonous plants and move them out of baby's reach. Always store your and visitors' purses out of baby's reach.
- If you plan to hook a highchair to your kitchen table, check that the table is sturdy and strong.



THE NURSERY

BABYPROOFING THE NURSERY

- Place baby wipes and supplies where you can reach them from the changing table, but baby can't.
- Put a thick rug or carpet below the changing table.
- Position the crib away from windows, heaters, lamps, wall decorations, and cords.
- Finish all painting and wallpapering at least eight weeks before baby is expected to avoid exposing baby to potentially harmful fumes.
- Check that none of the crib slats are more than two and 3/8 inches apart and that all the bolts and screws are tight. Make sure there are no gaps between the mattress and crib.
- Keep **bumpers**, comforters, pillows, blankets and toys out of the crib.
- Check all nursery furniture according to our safety **suggestions**.



THE GARAGE

BABYPROOFING THE GARAGE

Babyproofing doesn't just stop at your front door—ensuring that your car is clear of any hazards is also part of the deal.

Your vehicle is the first place baby will encounter on his way home from the hospital, so it's important to brush up on **car seat safety basics**.

Here are some tips to keep in mind as you're babyproofing the car.

- Install an approved rear-facing car seat in the back seat (in the middle, if possible) and get it inspected (for free!) by a local **certified child passenger safety technician**.
- If the sun is strong in your area, apply stick-on sun shades to the back windows to block the rays (but avoid ones that hang or connect with suction cups, which can fall or pop off).
- Clear the car of small objects that could be choking hazards, such as coins and pens.



CHILDPROOFING CHECKLIST

(FOR THE CRAWLER)

FOR A CRAWLING BABY ON THE MOVE

Now that you've got a crawler on your hands, it's time to do a second round of childproofing.

As soon as baby can sit up and pivot on her tummy, it's time to start childproofing your home in anticipation of the next big baby milestone that's not far behind — crawling! Once baby is on the move (generally between 6 and 10 months), she enters a whole new world of potential dangers and disasters, so now's the time to double down on safety.

You probably did a round of baby-proofing before your little one even

arrived on the scene, but recheck those safety preparations, since baby's height, reach and mobility are significantly greater these days.

We caught up with Dina DiMaggio, MD, a pediatrician at Pediatric Associates of NYC and NYU Langone Medical Center in New York, to round up the most important tips on childproofing your home.

In this article:

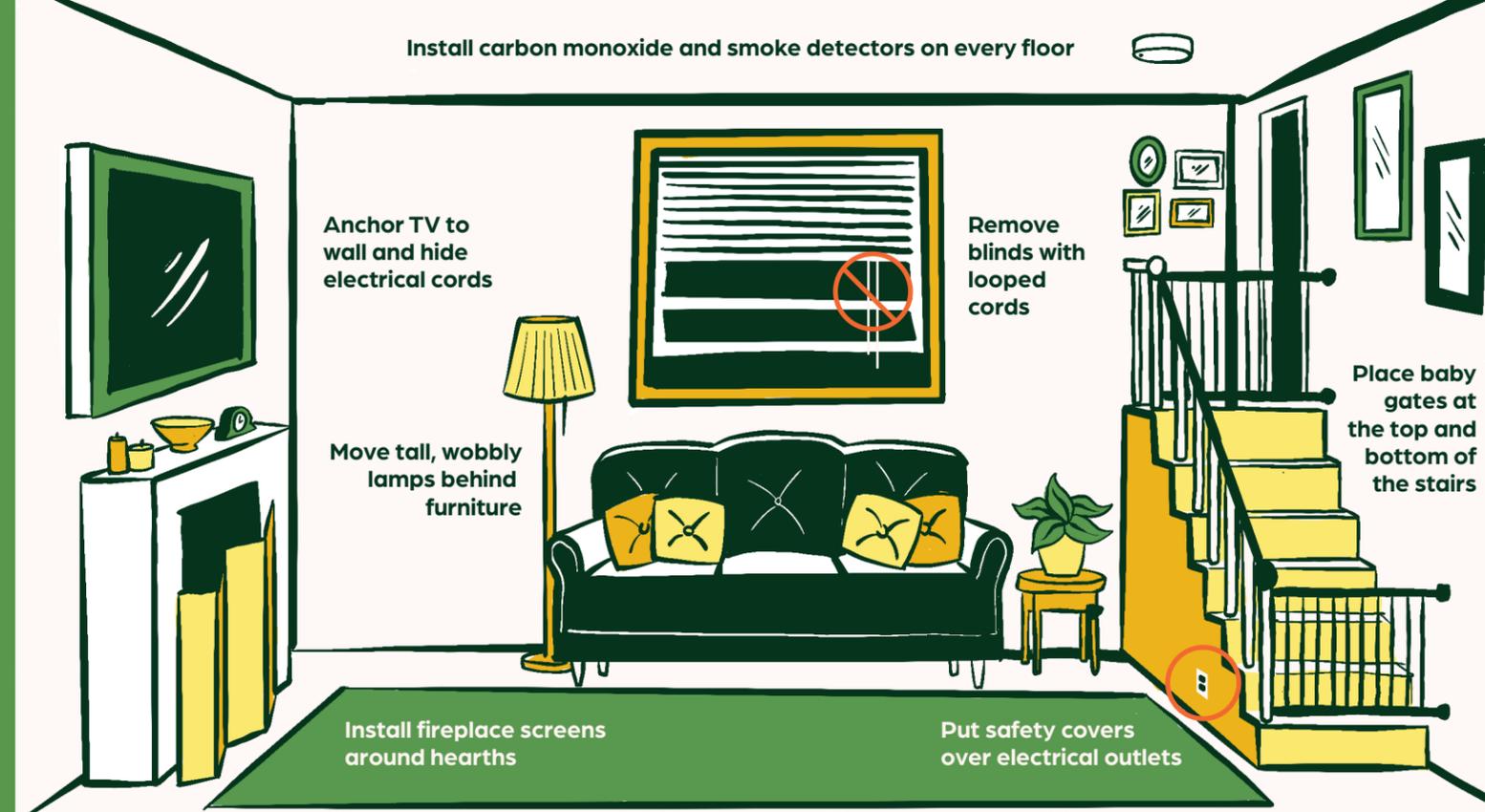
General childproofing tips

Childproofing the kitchen

Childproofing the nursery

Childproofing the bathroom

Childproofing the backyard



Install carbon monoxide and smoke detectors on every floor

Anchor TV to wall and hide electrical cords

Remove blinds with looped cords

Place baby gates at the top and bottom of the stairs

Move tall, wobbly lamps behind furniture

Install fireplace screens around hearths

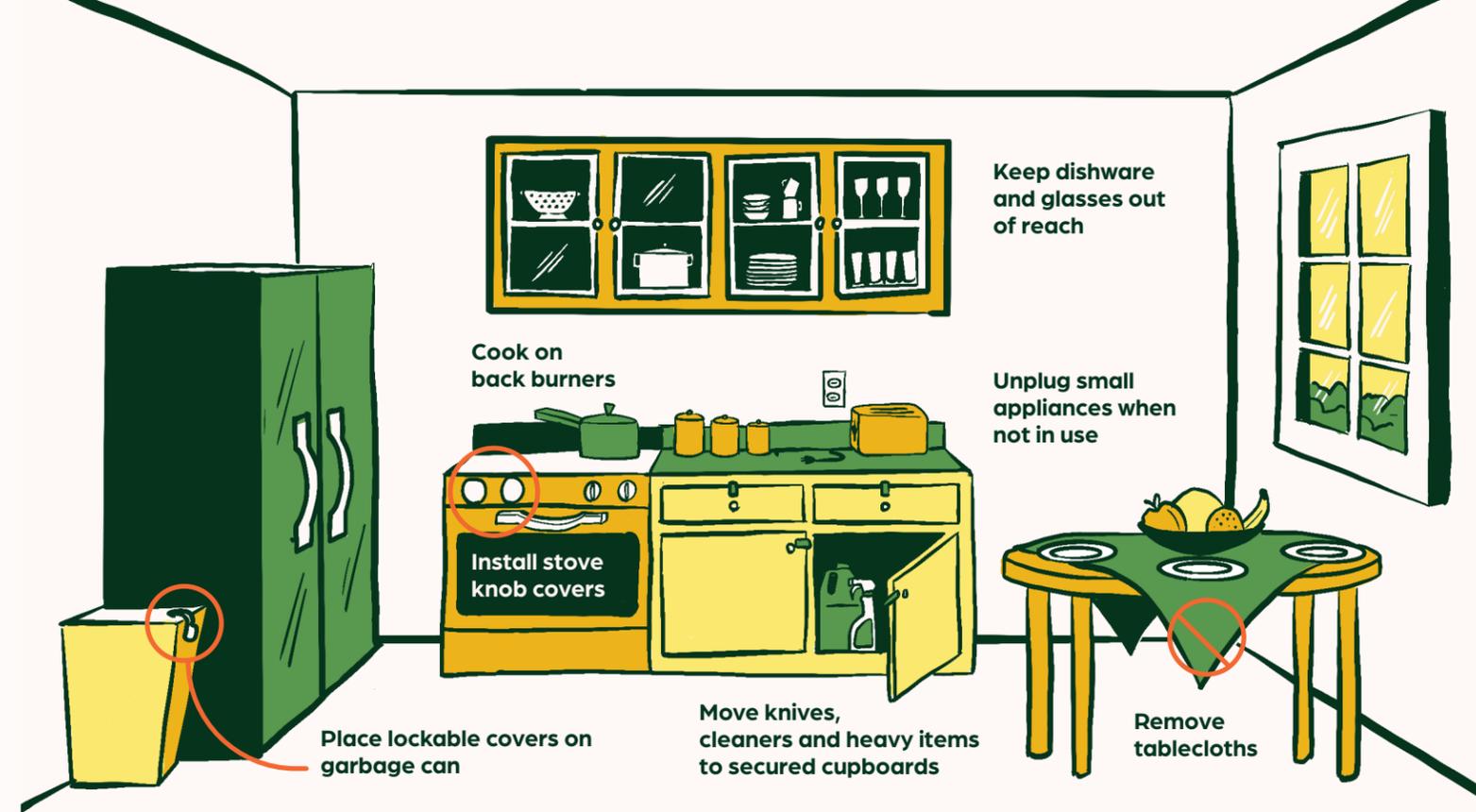
Put safety covers over electrical outlets

AROUND THE HOUSE

- Move all dangerous items (cleaners, knives, heavy objects, medications, etc.) to cupboards and drawers out of baby's reach.
- Latch closed any cupboards, doors, and drawers within baby's reach to avoid pinched fingers or unaccompanied explorations; purchase baby-safe doorstops for every door to prevent accidental closings.
- Move all electric cords behind furniture.
- Put safety covers over electrical outlets.
- Secure heavy furniture such as bookcases and cabinets to walls to prevent accidental tipping.
- Put TVs and other heavy items on sturdy furniture, move as close to the wall or corner as possible, or upgrade to a flat screen and hang it on the wall away from baby hands.
- Move all tall, wobbly lamps behind furniture.
- Put baby gates or fences at the top and bottom of every set of stairs, no matter how short the flight.
- Block access to all floor heaters and radiators.
- Use garden fences or Plexiglass to block any space of more than four inches between stair or balcony rails.

AROUND THE HOUSE (CONTINUED)

- Put colorful window-clings on sliding doors and any other large panes of glass.
- Install window guards and stops, and put safety bars or gates on all windows, landings and decks.
- Place food and water for pets out of baby's reach.
- Install fireplace screens around all hearths (but remember—screens get hot too).
- Place logs, matches, tools, and keys out of baby's reach.
- Never leave any amount of water in an open container or bucket.
- If guns are in the house, keep them unloaded and locked in a gun safe, and make sure all firearms are equipped with trigger locks.
- Guns and ammunition should be stored separately.



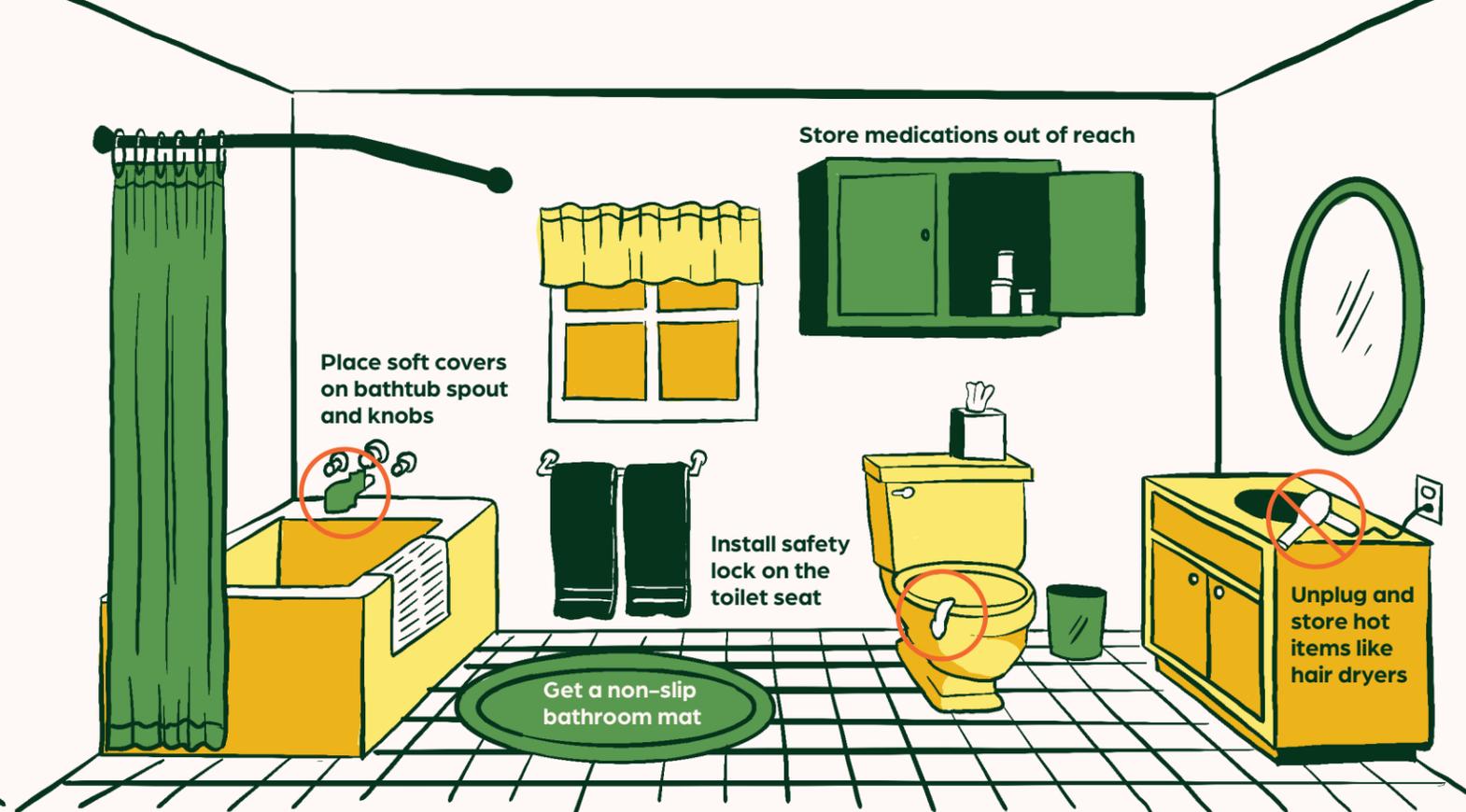
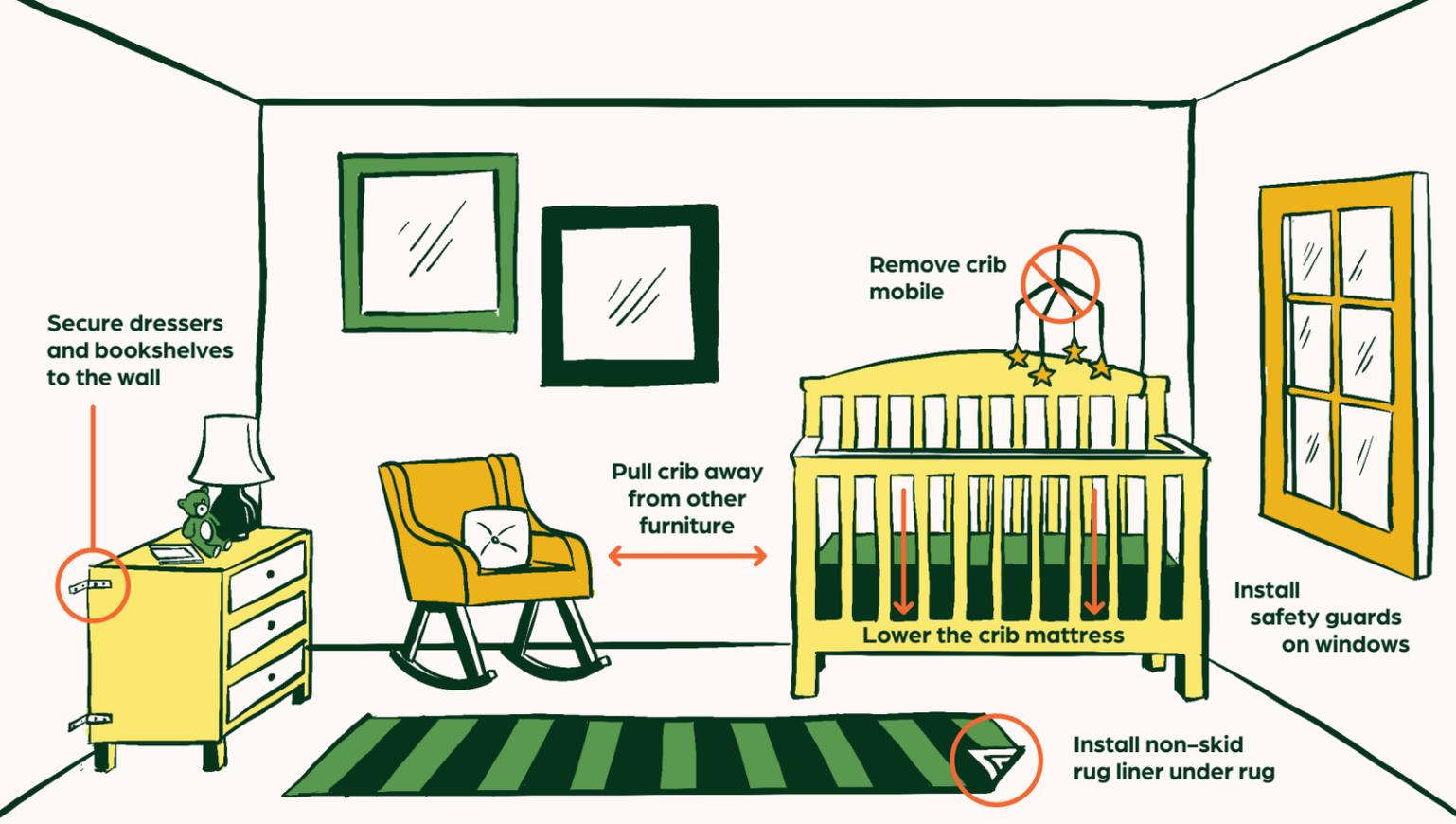
THE KITCHEN

CHILDPROOFING THE KITCHEN

The kitchen is a natural gathering place for many families—after all, they say it's the heart of the home. And what's more fun for baby than banging away on pots and pans?

But childproofing the kitchen—the land of sharp knives, hot cookware, and cabinets galore—is a must. Follow these important childproofing steps:

- Install covers for stove and oven knobs, a latch for the oven door, and a stove guard to block burners, or upgrade to a stove with big removable knobs and touch control.
- Get in the habit of cooking on the back burners, turning pot handles toward the wall, and placing hot food and drinks away from the edges of tables and counters.
- Put lockable covers on garbage cans or place them in latched cupboards.
- Install safety latches on refrigerator and freezer doors.
- Forgo tablecloths—if baby yanks, everything on top will crash down.



THE NURSERY

CHILDPROOFING THE NURSERY

Your next childproofing stop is baby's room. Even if you keep a watchful eye on your little one while he's zooming around, you'd be surprised how quickly he can find trouble overnight. Keep these childproofing tips in mind:

- Remove mobiles and anything else hanging above the crib.
- Move the crib away from anything that could be used for climbing or pulled into the crib.
- Lower the crib mattress so baby can't climb out.
- Make sure dressers and other nursery furniture are secured to the wall to avoid tip-overs.

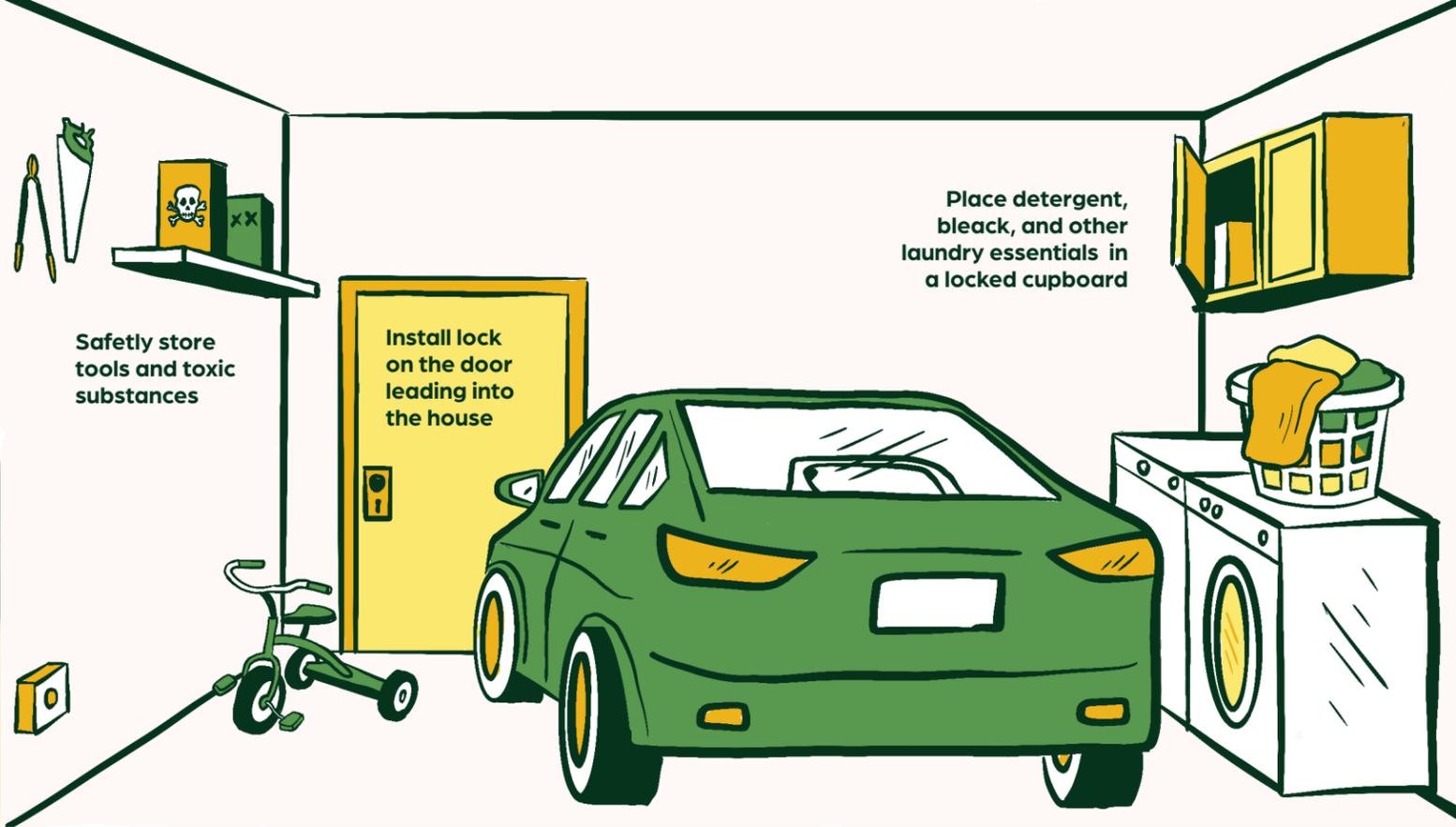
THE BATHROOM

CHILDPROOFING THE BATHROOM

Medicine bottles and open water are the big concerns here. "A lot of kids love playing with water, and it only takes a second to get into the bathtub," DiMaggio says.

Here's how to go about childproofing the bathroom so bathtime stays all fun and games.

- Make sure all medications have child-proof tops and are stored high out of baby's reach.
- Place soft covers on the bath spout and knobs.
- Put non-slip mats in and beside the bathtub.
- Install safety locks on toilet seat covers.
- Unplug hot items like curling irons and store them beyond baby's reach.



THE BACKYARD

CHILDPROOFING THE BACKYARD

Backyards are prime play spots for little ones—as long as you take a few safety precautions. Pools and tools should especially be on your childproofing radar. Here are some top tips for childproofing the backyard:

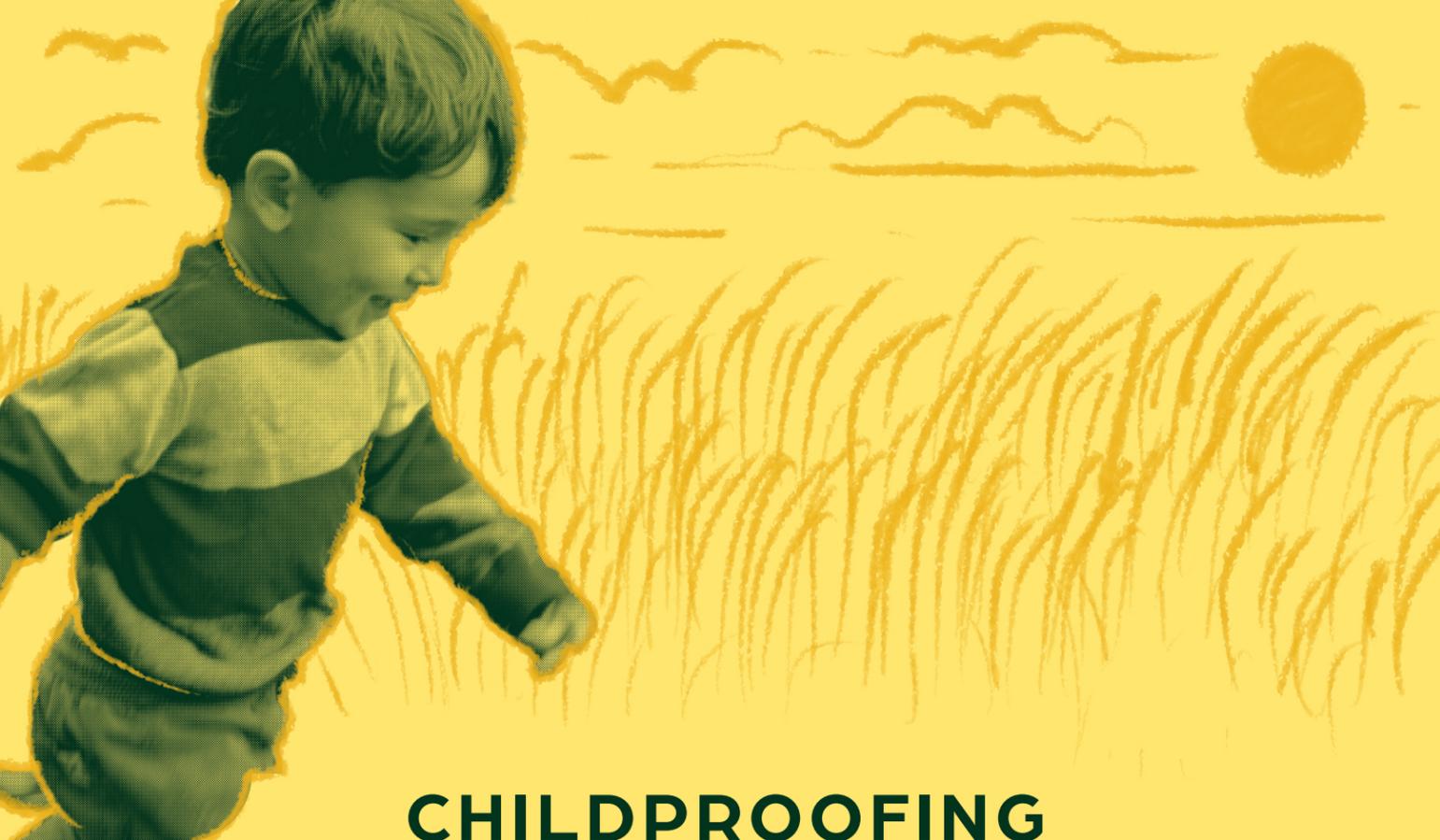
- Make sure backyard fences are sturdy, and gates latch securely.
- Empty wading pools and store them upright after every use.
- If you have a pool, surround it with a locked fence at least four feet tall. Also, install a safety alarm on the door that leads out to the pool.
- After it rains or snows, check for any collections of water and drain completely.
- Keep all yard and gardening tools securely stored away.

THE GARAGE

CHILDPROOFING THE GARAGE

Is the house completely childproofed? Congratulations! But you're not done yet. Your vehicle can contain its fair share of potential dangers for baby—but thankfully, childproofing the car is pretty simple using these key steps:

- Secure unused seat belts since they can pose a strangulation hazard.
- Make sure any tools, toxic substances, and choking hazards are securely stored out of baby's reach.
- Check that the garage door safety sensor works.
- Never leave your child in the car alone, even for a second.
- Make sure baby's car seat is rear-facing and installed correctly.
- Use the rear door child locks.
- Engage the window locks.
- Never leave keys in the car.



CHILDPROOFING CHECKLIST

(FOR THE WALKER)

FOR A WALKING CHILD ON THE MOVE

When baby is off and toddling, those safety latches and gates alone won't cut it. Here's how to childproof to keep baby safe once they're walking.

Finally have a walker on your hands? Congrats! Once baby starts moving, it'll be hard to get them to slow down. Consider those first steps a sign it's time to step up your safety game in the toddler-proofing department.

Wondering where you should start? According to Debra Holtzman, author of *The Safe Baby: A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Home Safety and Healthy Living*, look at the space through your child's eyes. "It's important to see your home from your child's new perspective," she says.

"Get down on your hands and knees to get a bird's eye view of all the potential problems."

Alison Rhodes, founder of SafetyMom.com, adds that baby will pull everything within reach. It's important to "be mindful of window cords, curtains, and tablecloths," she says. "Baby's new exploring skills mean you should also be extra careful to close doors to rooms that are off-limits."

Consider covering door knobs with old socks, which makes them difficult for baby to grasp.

Doing a crawl-through of your home and looking out for items baby can pull on is a great starting point, but there are child-proofing precautions to take in each area of the house to keep baby safe. Here, Holtzman and Rhodes weigh in on what you need to know.

AROUND THE HOUSE

- Install window guards. A window guard should prevent the window from opening more than four inches. Window coverings should also be cordless (check out WindowCoverings.org for advice and a free retrofit safety kit).
- Cushion hard furniture edges with corner guards.
- Secure heavy furniture, paintings, and even televisions to the walls to prevent them from falling.
- Block electrical outlets with furniture or outlet covers.
- Raise breakables out of reach (pro tip: it's higher than you think).
- Elevate plants out of reach (falling leaves can also be a hazard).
- All stairs should have baby gates on the top and bottom.
- Install a lock on doors to exercise rooms and home offices, where potential dangers abound.
- Remove all potential choking hazards. (As a rule, if the object can fit in an empty toilet roll, it's unsafe.)
- Move lamps and other wobbly items behind furniture and out of baby's reach.
- Block baby's access to any fireplaces, floor heaters, or radiators.

THE KITCHEN

- Install a safety latch on all low cabinets and drawers.
- Secure knives in drawers with safety latches.
- Install safety latches on the refrigerator, freezer, and oven door.
- Remove fridge magnets; they're potential choking hazards.
- Install guards on stove and oven knobs, and always turn pot handles toward the back wall.
- Any food or water for pets should be placed where baby can't reach it.
- Store all cleaning products out of sight and reach.
- Lock away plastic wraps and tie bags in knots to avoid strangling and suffocating hazards.

THE BATHROOM

- Store all appliances with cords, including hair dryers, flat irons, etc.
- Secure the toilet with a safety lock.
- Secure the medicine cabinet and make sure all medicines have childproof tops and are out of baby's reach.
- Store shampoos and other bath items instead of leaving them in the shower.

THE NURSERY

- Drop the crib mattress to the lowest position to keep baby from climbing out.
- Remove the mobile from above the crib since baby can now stand up and likely reach it.
- Move the crib away from windows.
- Switch to toy chests without or with lightweight removable lids, as children can get trapped.
- Secure dressers, bookshelves, and other heavy furniture to the walls to prevent tip-overs.

THE GARAGE & BACKYARD

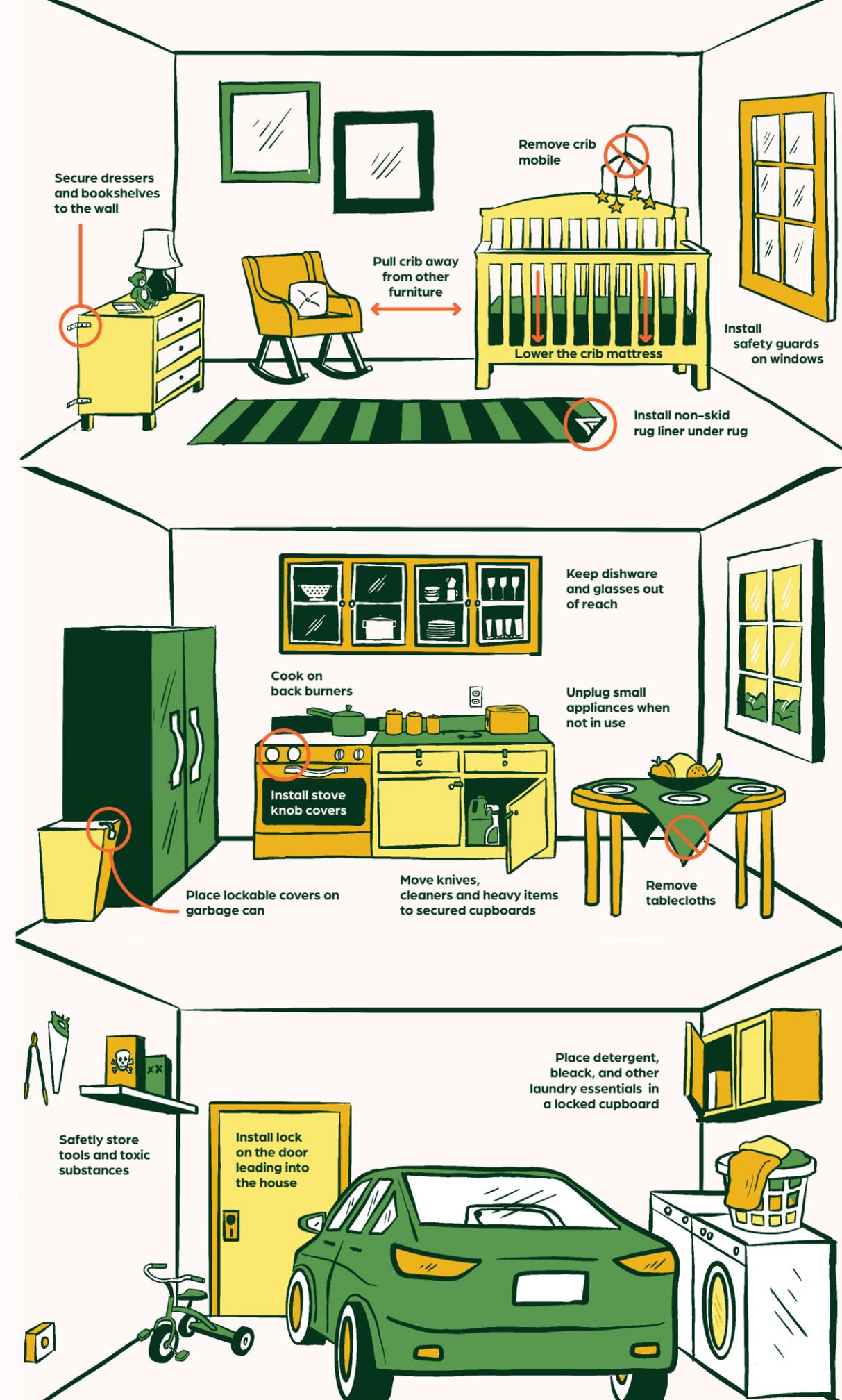
- Install an auto-reverse motion sensor on the garage door so it will recoil if it detects movement.
- If you have a pool, install a four-sided isolation fence at least five feet high and a locked cover on the hot tub.
- It may also be worthwhile to install a pool alarm.
- Install safety latches and locks on all sliding glass doors.
- Store all yard and gardening tools where baby can't reach.

In addition to childproofing your home, take the time to teach your child what is off-limits and unsafe.

Even if your little one isn't talking yet, preverbal kids understand far more than what they're capable of saying.

And as always, never hesitate to reach out to your pediatrician with any questions or concerns specific to your child and home.

CHILDPROOFING YOUR HOME



OTHER SAFE KIDS OFFERINGS



QR code to
Safe Kids webpage

SAFE SLEEP: CRIBETTES & SLEEP SACKS

To support safe sleep practices for babies in our community, Whitman County Public Health provides eligible families who meet our income guidelines with cribettes, sleep sacks, and safe sleep education. Complete an application today on our Safe Kids webpage to apply. *Follow QR code to Safe Kids webpage.*

SAFE TRAVEL: CAR SEATS

Car Seat Installation & Car Seat Checks

Whitman County has several car seat technicians and instructors throughout the county who would gladly assist parents and caregivers with car seat installations and car seat checks. To find a local car seat technician, please visit the National Child Safety Certification. *QR code to directory below.*

Free Car Seats

Need a safe, non-expired car seat but can't afford one? Whitman County Public Health has a supply of car seats available for families in need, who meet our income guidelines.

Complete an application today on our Safe Kids WCPH webpage to apply. *Follow QR code to Safe Kids webpage.*

SAFE PLAY: BICYCLE SAFETY

Whitman County Public Health works to prevent head injuries in children by provide bicycling helmets throughout the county.

We have a supply of bicycle helmets in various sizes for children, if your child needs one please stop by one of our WCPH office locations during normal business hours.



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technicians



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