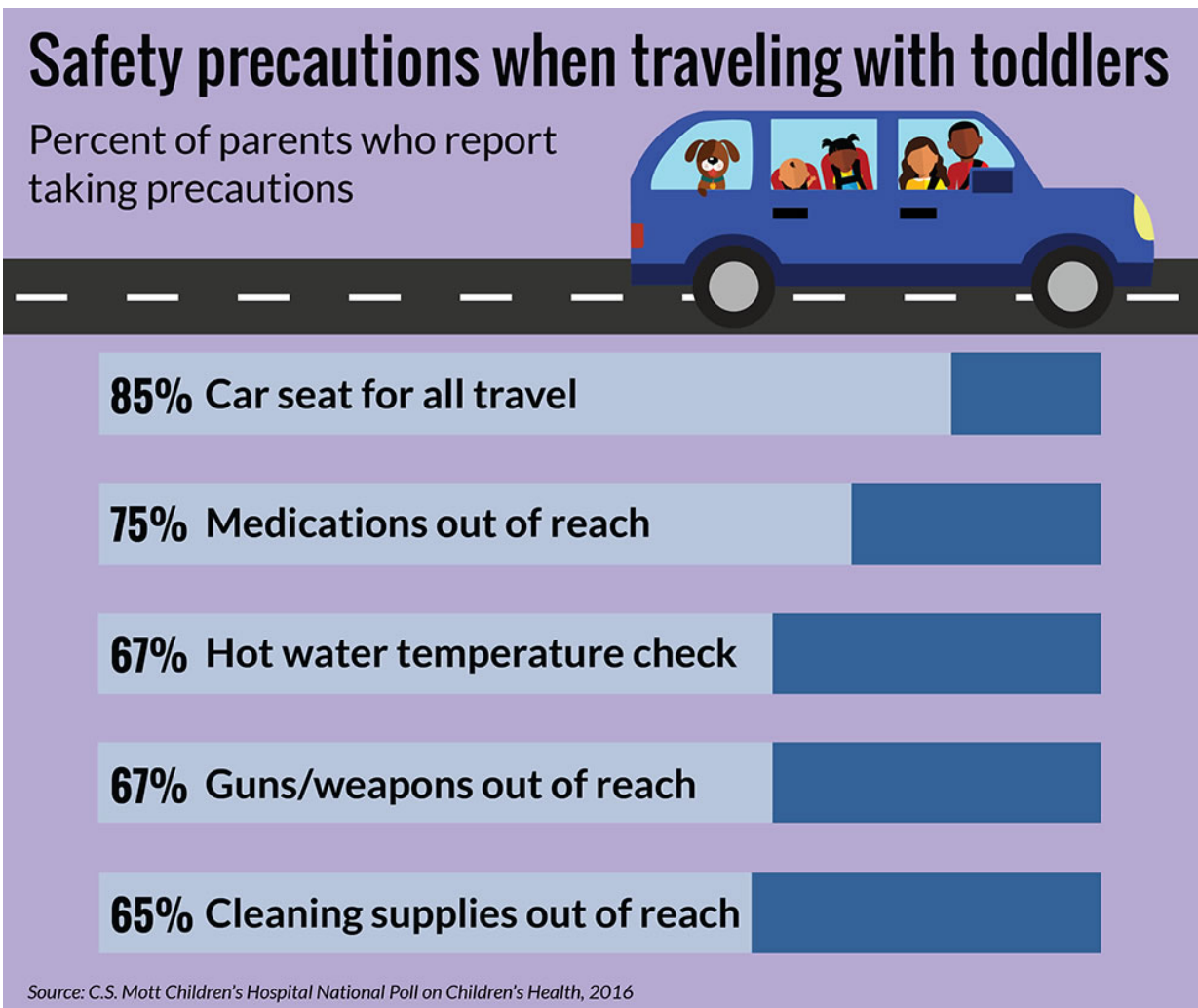


Some parents forgo car seats, other safety measures while traveling, poll finds

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Some parents may overlook safety risks to kids during travel. Credit: C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health

Parents' to-do lists before traveling with toddlers this holiday season may include packing an emergency stock of snacks, activities and wardrobe changes.

But what some may not plan for ahead of vacation: accidental poisoning risks, gun [safety](#) and Uber rides.

A new report from the University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll suggests that some parents may overlook safety risks to kids during travel, including car seat use during taxi or share rides and preventing easy access to medications, cleaning supplies and even weapons at a place they're staying.

Each year, millions of families with toddlers travel during the [holiday season](#), leaving behind daily routines and a child-proofed home environment. The nationally representative poll asked parents with at least one child ages 2 to 5 about recent travel habits.

"Parents are typically vigilant about safety measures, making sure toddlers are always in car seats and that medications and cleaning supplies are locked up or out of reach. But they may be less fastidious while on vacation, leaving medications in open suitcases or on hotel tables or not childproofing a relative's house," says poll co-director Sarah Clark, M.P.H.

"It's important that parents are just as attentive to child safety risks on trips as they would be at home."

Among the most troubling findings: 15 percent of parents said they did not put their toddler in a car seat for every car ride on a recent trip, with the majority of cases involving taxi or share ride services such as Uber or Lyft.

"Car crashes are a leading cause of injury and death among toddlers, which is why it's critical that parents plan ahead to make sure their child is properly restrained during every car ride on vacation," Clark says. "Planning for [car seats](#) can be inconvenient in certain destinations, but going without is never worth the risk."

Meanwhile, three quarters of parents remembered to safely store medications when traveling with their toddler, and two-thirds of parents checked to make sure cleaning supplies, guns and other weapons were out of their child's reach. Two thirds also checked the hot water temperature wherever they were staying. Forty percent of parents reported taking all of these safety precautions—while 3 percent did none.

"Traveling with a toddler can be a daunting task," Clark says. "Many parents spend quite a bit of time planning ahead to avoid meltdowns by scheduling days around naps and packing items that will keep their kids entertained. It's just as important that parents plan for measures to keep kids safe on the road."

Traveling safely with toddlers

Clark offers these safety tips:

- Either bring a car seat or rent one if needed during travel. Many airlines allow [parents](#) to check a car seat for free. If you are taking a share ride and don't have a car seat, reserve a car that comes with a toddler car seat.
- If staying at the home of friends or relatives, ask hosts to put medications, household cleaners and other potential dangers in a location out of a toddler's reach.
- Pack portable safety devices (e.g., cabinet latches and baby gates) to use as barriers to potential dangers, both in home or

hotel settings.

- Once you arrive at a destination, do a thorough review of the home—from the toddler's perspective—to identify potential safety hazards, including medications, cleaning supplies and other poisonous substances. A common cause of poisoning is household cleaners, which are often stored in cabinets low to the ground right at toddler level.
- Ask hosts if they own guns or other weapons and ensure that they are stored in a safe manner. Given recent instances of accidental shooting by and of [toddlers](#), specific safety precautions related to guns and weapons are important to consider.

More information: See the full Mott Poll Report:
[mottnpch.org/reports-surveys/t ... -and-safety-vacation](https://mottnpch.org/reports-surveys/t...-and-safety-vacation)

Provided by University of Michigan Health System

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