

Children and guns don't mix! Locking up firearms can greatly reduce unwanted access. Approximately 38 percent of Virginians keep firearms in or around their homes; and 1 in 6 are unlocked and loaded.

### *Virginia Statistics 2003*

- There were 798 firearm deaths in Virginia in 2003 making it the second leading cause of injury death.
- There were 446 firearm related suicides, 330 firearm related homicides and 11 accidental firearm deaths.
- Firearms were the leading cause of injury for suicide deaths, responsible for over half (56%) of these deaths.
- There were 596 firearm related injury hospitalizations in
- Forty-eight were self-inflicted, and 339 were assault-related. Twenty-eight were shotgun related and 163 were handgun related.
- The median charge per episode of care was \$19,462 and the average length of stay was 6.5 days. Over 22 million dollars were billed for firearm related hospitalizations.
- There were 8 hospitalizations from BB/pellet guns for unintentional injury, 1 for suicide and 1 for assault.

### *Gun Safety Tips*

- Store firearms unloaded and locked with a firearm safe, locked box, trigger or chamber lock
- Store and lock ammunition in a separate place
- Remove firearms from your home if you have a depressed or suicidal family member
- Before you send your child to someone's house, ASK if firearms in the home are stored unloaded and locked; ASK if the ammunition is stored separately; ASK about shotguns and rifles too, not just handguns
- Invite the children to play at your home if you have doubts about the safety of someone else's home
- Talk with your children about the risk of firearm injury in places they may visit or play
- Teach your child if she finds a firearm to leave it alone and let an adult know right away
- Instruct your child to leave the room and tell an adult immediately if another child shows him or her a weapon
- Ask family and friends to use these safe storage steps

#### **For More Information Contact:**

Virginia Department of Health, Center for Injury & Violence Prevention  
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1-800-732-8333, [www.vahealth.org/civp](http://www.vahealth.org/civp)