

Quake safety for young children



FIX. FASTEN.
DON'T FORGET.



**Natural Hazards
Commission**
Toka Tū Ake

Earthquakes and New Zealand



Aotearoa New Zealand didn't get its nickname of 'the shaky isles' for nothing. Every year our land experiences around **150 earthquakes** strong enough to be felt by people.

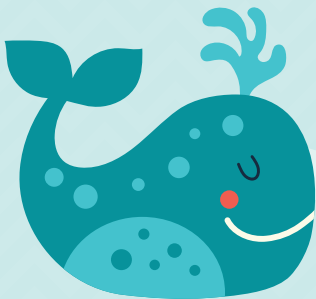
Most earthquakes have little impact on us, but our recent history is scattered with earthquakes that have caused significant damage to property and injuries to people.

We know that another damaging earthquake will happen, but we don't know exactly when or where. What we do know is that preparing today will help protect your home and your whānau.

Children can be hurt by falling objects during earthquake shaking, so we need to make their environment as safe as possible. Here are six important steps to take in your child's room that will help make it safer.

Making your child's room safer for quakes is quick and easy

- Use brackets or straps to **secure tall and heavy furniture** items to wall studs. See over the page to learn how.
- Place your child's **bassinet, cot or bed** away from **windows**—ideally next to an internal wall.
- Hang pictures or shelves** away from where your child **sleeps** so nothing can fall onto them.
- Ensure any pictures or mirrors in the room are **hung on appropriate hooks** (no single nails).
- Move any heavy items off high shelves** to a safer spot lower down.
- If your child's cot or bed has castors, **make sure the castors are locked** to help prevent the cot or bed moving around during earthquake shaking.



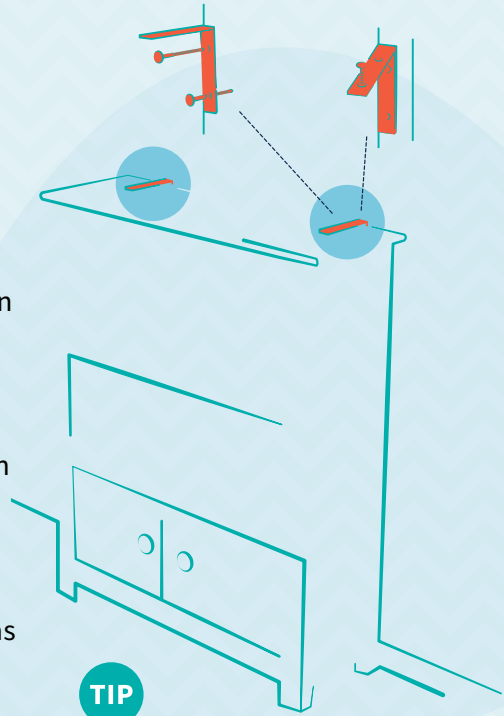
Items of furniture such as drawers and bookcases can topple over during earthquake shaking (or if a toddler tries to use them as a ladder). The good news is making these items safer is pretty easy.

If you're renting, your landlord should allow you to secure tall and heavy items to make them safer. Just make sure you discuss it with them first.

How to secure tall and heavy furniture

1. Use a pencil to mark the wall where the top of the furniture comes to, then move the furniture from the wall.
2. Find the studs in the wall by tapping lightly and listening for the duller sound of the stud. You can also use an electronic stud finder.
3. Use 63mm 12-gauge screws to screw metal angle brackets into the wall studs. To hide the brackets as much as possible, attach them as two upside-down Ls, with the bracket arm facing downward against the wall. Take care to avoid electrical wiring when drilling.
4. Move the item of furniture back to the wall.
5. Screw the other arm of the bracket down onto the furniture with 15-25mm 8-gauge screws.

Securing tall and heavy furniture



TIP

If you don't want to screw into an item of furniture, stick-on restraints are available from hardware stores or online. Be sure to check the brackets or straps are suitable for the size of the furniture you're securing.

Making the rest of your home safer

Now you've completed the steps to make your child's room safer, think about what other items around your home could also be a hazard.



It's a great idea to secure tall and heavy furniture and appliances throughout your home. Think about bookcases, cabinets, TVs and whiteware. Latches on cupboards and drawers will not only help keep curious little ones safe, but will also help keep items in place during earthquake shaking.

There are lots of things you can do to make your place more secure and every step you take will make you and your whānau that extra bit safer.



Find out how to prepare your home and protect your whānau at naturalhazards.govt.nz/be-prepared

Protecting your baby or child during an earthquake

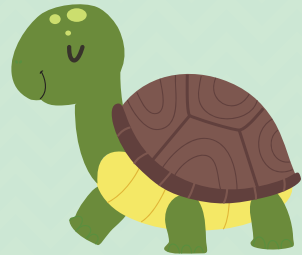
If you're with your child during an earthquake, carefully hold them against your chest and **Drop, Cover and Hold**—ideally under a sturdy piece of furniture.

This is a bit easier with infants who are not yet crawling, but you can still provide protection to an older child by crouching over them and holding them in place. Be sure to cover your own neck and head too and make sure your baby still has space to breathe.

Caring for babies in an emergency

Babies need special care and attention in an emergency. As roads and shops may be closed for three days or more you'll need to have supplies to get your baby through. Think about:

- disposable nappies
- baby wipes
- alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- rubbish bags for dirty nappies
- any medicines or creams your baby needs
- disposable gloves
- spare clothes, a blanket or special toy
- formula and clean water (see next page for more)



Make sure you also have supplies for your child in a grab bag, in case you need to leave home in a hurry. If your child often stays with family or carers, have some emergency supplies at their place as well as at home.

Information on this page is from the National Emergency Management Agency. For more on how to get ready and get through emergencies visit [getready.govt.nz](https://www.getready.govt.nz)

Feeding baby in an emergency



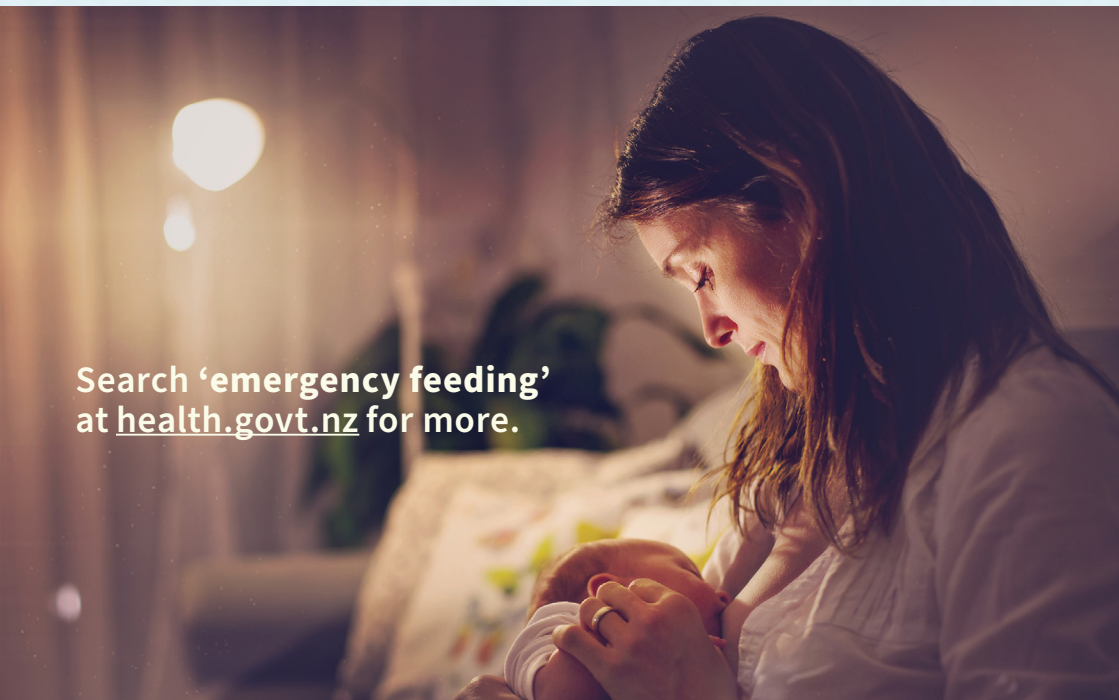
The Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora has published advice on feeding infants in an emergency.

Breastfeeding in an emergency is safe and helps your baby fight off stress and infections. Remember ‘Looking after the mum is looking after the baby’ so make sure you keep your energy up by having enough to eat and drink.

If you are using formula, you will need infant formula and clean water as well as feeding and sterilisation equipment to look after your baby in an emergency. That means you’ll need to plan carefully for how you’d manage if water and power supplies were cut off.

The Ministry of Health website has more information on how to prepare for and get through an emergency while caring for a baby aged 0-12 months.

Search ‘**emergency feeding**’
at [health.govt.nz](https://www.health.govt.nz) for more.





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