

# PROTECT Your Family, Community and Yourself from GUN VIOLENCE



## KEEP YOUR KIDS SAFE:

Just talking to your child about gun safety is not enough. Children are naturally curious and open to peer pressure. With a gun in 40% of homes with children, to keep your child safer:

**TIP 1: Always ask if there is a gun** in another family's home and, if so, how it is secured, before sending your child over to play or your teen to a party. If you have doubts, invite the children to play at your house.

**TIP 2: If you own a gun, secure it:** Keep the gun unloaded and locked up with ammunition in a separate lockbox, and keep the keys with you at all times. It will take less than a minute or two to unlock and load if needed.

- Always check to be sure there's no bullet in the chamber before cleaning a firearm.
- When handling or cleaning, never leave a gun unattended, not even for a moment.
- Make sure that no one who is staying or living with you is keeping an unsecured firearm in your house.
- Most school shooters use firearms taken from a relative's home. Don't let that weapon be yours.

## PREVENT SUICIDES:

- Two thirds of all firearm-related deaths in the U.S.—more than 20,000 a year—are suicides.
- Suicide is often an impulsive act spurred by a break-up, job loss, legal trouble, etc. From teens to seniors, all ages are at risk.
- 85%-90% of suicide attempts with firearms result in death.
- Less than 5% of suicide attempts using most other methods succeed, and 90% of survivors will not die by suicide later.

**TIP 3: Store firearms off-site** if you suspect a friend or family member may be suicidal. You may save a life.

## **PREVENT ACCIDENTAL SHOOTINGS OR HAVING YOUR GUN USED AGAINST YOU:**

- For each time a firearm is used in home self-defense, there are seven assaults or murders, 11 suicide attempts, and four accidents involving guns in or around a home.
- A person carrying a gun is 4-5 times more likely to be shot in an assault than one not carrying.
- A woman's chances of being killed by her abuser increase over 7 times if he has access to a gun, including her own.

**TIP 4: Consider pepper spray** to defend yourself and your home or workplace instead of a firearm.

- Pepper spray causes burning pain, impaired vision and breathing, and can disrupt an attack and let you escape to safety.
- Pepper spray is inexpensive and may be carried in places where firearms can't.
- Be sure to watch training videos and practice before use.

## **PROTECT YOUR COMMUNITY:**

**TIP 5: Don't buy firearms for someone else—ever.**

A safer community starts with you.

- Being a 'straw buyer' for a person who is not allowed to buy a weapon is a felony: Punishment can include \$250,000 in fines and 10 years in prison.
- Straw purchasing is the most common way criminals get guns.
- Never buy firearms for your friend, boyfriend, husband or anyone else.

## **YOUR VOICE MATTERS:**

Finally, let elected representatives know you want sensible laws to keep firearms away from criminals, abusers, and the mentally impaired. Elected officials count every call, letter or email they receive. Speak up and tell them where you stand.

We can keep our families and communities safer from gun violence by taking simple precautions and calling for commonsense laws. Please share these tips with friends and loved ones.

Find more resources and footnotes at [godbeforeguns.org/gun-safety-tips.html](http://godbeforeguns.org/gun-safety-tips.html).

