

## **Smoke Alarms Using Mother's Voice Wake Children Better than High-Pitch Tone Alarms**

### **Soundbites:**

**[Gary A. Smith, MD, DrPH](#)**, director of the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital

**Dr. Smith states how much faster children escaped when they heard their mother's voice:**

*"Most homes use a high-pitched tone smoke alarm, and when children heard that alarm sound it took them almost five minutes to escape from the bedroom. However, when they heard the mother's voice on the smoke alarm they were out within 18 to 28 seconds." :14*

**Dr. Smith says children slept through the loud alarm but woke up immediately to mom's voice:**

*"I think one of the most remarkable things that we saw were children that would sleep up to five minutes through a very loud, high-pitched tone alarm, the type of alarm that's in most households, and yet the next time they fell asleep and we sounded the mother's voice in the smoke alarm, they woke up almost immediately and immediately left the room." :18*

**Dr. Smith says the smoke alarm with mother's voice was 3 times more effective at waking kids up:**

*"We found that smoke alarms that use mother's voice were three times more effective at waking up children than a high-pitched tone alarm, and that's the type of alarm that are in most homes today." :11*

**Dr. Smith says an alarm that more effectively wakes up kids can save lives:**

*"The fact that were able to find an alarm sound that can awaken children more quickly and get them to escape from a bedroom in case of a fire could save lives." :10*

**Dr. Smith say the voice alarm was just as effective without using the child's first name:**

*"Our findings show that a smoke alarm that uses mother's voice is effective without even using the child's first name. That means one alarm can be used for multiple children in the same household." :10*

**Dr. Smith says families should continue to use traditional smoke alarms while research continues:**

*"Because about half the deaths that occur in home fires occur in households that do not have working smoke alarms, we strongly encourage families to continue to use traditional smoke alarms as our research continues." :12*

**Dr. Smith says children require louder sounds to awaken, putting them at higher risk during fires:**

*"Children sleep longer and deeper than adults and require louder sounds to awaken than adults, and for these reasons, they're much more prone to die or be injured in a house fire at night when asleep." :10*

**Dr. Smith says an adult should make a plan and check that a child is awake and is able to escape:**  
*“If you have a child in your household that’s younger than about 12 years of age, you should have a plan for an adult to go check to make sure that that child is awake and is able to escape if the smoke alarm goes off in the middle of the night.” :12*

**Dr. Smith says families should make a plan for what to do in case of a fire and practice it:**  
*“Families should sit down and make a plan together and practice that plan for escaping from the house in case of a fire. They should practice that during the day as well as during the night.” :10*

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