



Protecting Young Children from Falls

Approximately 2.8 million children visit the emergency department each year for fall-related injuries. For children less than 1 year of age, falls account for more than 50% of nonfatal injuries. These range from cuts and bruises to open wounds, fractures, and even brain injuries. Below are some tips to help reduce your child's risk of fall-related injuries.

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/safechild/child_injury_data.html

What Can You Do to Prevent Falls?

Furniture

- Never leave babies alone on any furniture. This includes beds, tables, sofas, cribs with the guardrails down, and changing tables. Your little one may not roll over yet, but you don't want the first time to result in an accident.
- Choose baby products that meet safety standards.
- Look for safety features on high chairs, cribs, and other equipment. Use as directed and secure straps and buckles.
- Pad sharp corners, such as those on a glass coffee table.

Stairs

- Stairs can pose risks to people of all ages.
- Don't allow clutter on the steps.
- Use safety gates to keep infants and toddlers off the stairs.
- Don't use accordion gates with large openings that can trap small children.

Windows

- Falls from windows are often severe and even fatal for small children. A window left open as little as 5 inches can be a danger for young children. Young children should be watched even around closed windows to avoid the risk of falling through glass. To prevent falls from windows:
 - Install window guards on all windows above the first floor.
 - Be mindful when you open a window and make sure your child cannot reach it.
 - If a child is old enough to understand, set rules about playing near windows.
 - Arrange furniture so that nothing a child can climb on is close to a window.
 - Insect screens may keep bugs out, but they won't keep kids in. A child can fall right through the screen.

Floor Surfaces

- Use slip-resistant mats. Put slip-resistant stickers in tubs.
- Secure area rugs to the floor with foam backing, a rubber pad, or double-sided tape.
- Remove clutter and other hazards on floors.

At the Playground

Is your neighborhood playground safe? Here's what to look for:

- Equipment that has been designed for playground use.
- Separate play areas for younger children and older children. Children under age 5 should not play on equipment higher than 4 feet. Equipment for 5- to 12-year-olds should be no higher than 8 feet.
- Each piece of equipment should have a sticker specifying whether the equipment is intended for children 2–5 or 5–12 years of age.
- Soft surfaces around 12 inches deep under playground equipment to absorb the impact of falls. Suitable surfaces include wood chips, mulch, pea gravel, rubber, rubber-like material, or synthetic turf. Concrete, grass, blacktop, and packed surfaces are all too hard.
- The soft surface materials should cover a wide fall zone extending 6 feet around the equipment.
- Playground equipment should be spaced apart so that children are not crowded during play.
- Equipment with moving parts such as seesaws, swings, or roundabouts needs to be separate from the rest of the playground.
- Remember, accidents happen! Adults should always supervise children at the playground.



Watch Out for Baby Walkers!

Did you know baby walkers cause more injuries than any other nursery product? Thousands of children between the ages of 5 and 15 months are treated for baby-walker related injuries each year. Walker-related mishaps fall into two main categories:

- The walker tips over, or a child in a walker falls down stairs
- The walker allows toddlers to access hot stove tops, dangerous objects such as scissors, or poisonous substances in cabinets

Several national pediatric associations have called for a ban on baby walkers due to safety concerns. Here are a few safer alternatives:

- Stationary bouncers that allow a child to rotate and bounce
- Playpens
- High chairs