



Preventing Falls Among Children and Infants

Safety Tips:

Preventing Childhood Falls:
Childhood falls account for an estimated 2 million Emergency Departments visit each year. The majority of childhood fall related injuries occur at home, particularly among younger children.

Adult supervision, home modification and informed product selection can help reduce the likelihood of childhood falls and fall related injuries. To help protect your children from fall related injuries follow these tips: (*Note: if your child falls and acts abnormally in any way call your pediatrician immediately*).

Babies:

- Never leave babies alone on any furniture, including beds, tables, sofas, cribs and changing tables—even if they have never rolled over before. In just a few seconds, babies can wiggle or roll off furniture. Instead place them in a crib with secured guard rails or on the floor.

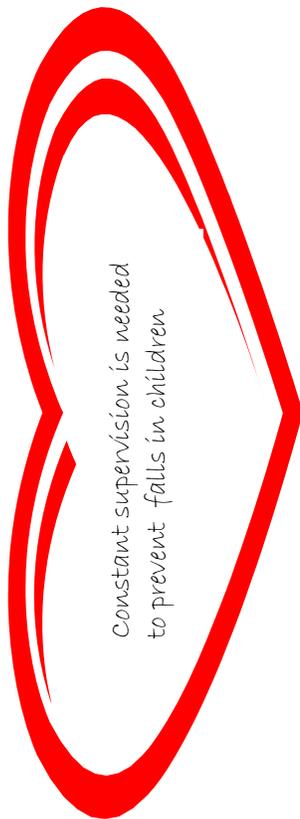


Babies are particularly vulnerable to falls - watch them constantly !

- When changing a baby in a crib or on a changing table, be sure the rails are up and secured. Some changing tables come with straps that can be used to secure your baby. Be sure to use all safety devices that come with your furniture. If you don't have access to a changing table or crib when changing your baby - be sure to keep one hand on your baby at all times.

Toddlers:

- Arrange furniture in such a way so that you can see children from all parts of the room.
- Install padding on sharp corners to decrease the severity of fall against them. Pay special attention to coffee tables, file cabinets and other items that may be low to the ground.
- Secure area and throw rugs with non - skid backing.



Safety tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics, National Safety Council, HUD, Lowe's Home Safety Council and the CDC.

What to look for...

When purchasing baby products, but items and equipment that meet current safety standards. Be sure to follow instructions and use the item as it supposed to be used. Refer to some of the resources listed as well as local resources, like Fairfield County Safe Kids, for more specific and current safety standards and features.

Cribs: (Look for the following features)

- Certification that it meets safety standards.
- Corner posts that do not stick up more than 1/16 of an inch.
- Rail slats that are spaced less than 2 3/8 inches apart. (If a soda can fits through the slats—the slats are to wide.)
- A snug fitting mattress.

Falls are responsible for more open wounds, fractures and brain injuries than any other cause of injury.

What to look for cont...

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- You might consider installing soft flooring around the crib lessen the severity of a fall, should one occur, such as thick carpeting, padding or a gym mat.

Highchairs:

- Look for important safety features such as a wide base, a locking tray, and a restraining belt or safety strap.
- Certification that it meets standards.:



Baby Walkers:

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, **baby walkers should not be used**. In 1997, baby walker related injuries resulted in more than 16,000 children receiving treatment in Emergency Departments. Most of the injuries occur when children in baby walkers fell down stairs or tipped over. Supervision is not enough to make these products safe - nearly 80% of all baby walker related accidents occurred while infants were being supervised. Baby walkers enable infants to be more mobile than they are developmentally ready for. And they allow infants to reach dangerous items which they would not have been able to reach if crawling.

A safer alternative to a baby walker is a "stationary walker" - a play table that allows movement of the legs and a turning seat.

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- Use rubber mats or slip resistant stickers on bathroom tiles and in the bathtub. *Never leave children alone in a bathtub!*
- Prevent tripping on wires, route them behind furniture or along walls and tape them down.
- Make stairs safer by keeping them well and free of clutter.
- Install window guards on all windows above the 1st floor (except those that serve as an emergency exit).
- Properly install safety gates at the top and bottom of all staircases. Teach members of the family, including older children, to consistently latch the gates whenever they use it.



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Monitor outdoor play:

- Select play equipment that is safe for children and age appropriate.
- Discourage play on outdoor decks, balconies, fire escapes, high porches and roofs.
- When possible remove climbing aides in the yard or on balconies. (ex: woodpiles, tree branches, outdoor furniture near deck railings.)
- Cover window wells to prevent children from falling in.

Falls affect everyone. For younger children and older adults, falls are a special concern, and fall related injuries can be extremely serious. Falls are the most common cause of Emergency Room visits for children and older adults