

Live safe. Play safe.

Your guide to preventing childhood falls



Be aware of where your child is playing and any potential dangers.

Home

- Keep babies and young children strapped in when using high-chairs, shopping carts, swings and strollers.
- Always supervise children, especially on raised surfaces, such as changing tables, beds, couches or other furniture.
- Keep hallways and stairs well-lit and clear of clutter.
- Consider anti-slip rugs for the floors in your home, and mats or decals in the bathtub or shower to help prevent falls.
- Move chairs, cribs and other furniture away from windows to prevent children from climbing to access the window.
- Attach furniture to the wall. Use anti-tip brackets, braces or wall straps to secure furniture to the wall. Install stops on dresser drawers to keep them from being pulled all the way out.
- Rearrange household items:
 - Store heavy objects on lower shelves or in lower drawers.
 - Put items you don't want your child to reach out of sight (such as a remote control) to keep children from climbing to get them.
- Recycle old TVs. To find a location that safely and easily recycles unwanted TVs, go to www.GreenerGadgets.org.

Stairways

- Use approved safety gates at the tops and bottoms of stairs and attach them to the wall, if possible. Remember to read the manufacturer's instructions and warning labels to make sure you have the right gate for your needs. Not all gates are safe for use at the top of stairs.
- When using a baby walker, ensure that gates/doors are closed to prevent them from falling down the stairs. Consider using a stationary activity center.
- Actively supervise toddlers on stairs. Hold their hand when walking up and down stairs.

TV and furniture

The facts:

- Every three weeks a child dies from a television tipping over.
- Each day, ten kids go to the ER because of a TV tip-over.
- Mount flat-panel TVs to the wall. Place older, box-style TVs on low, stable furniture that were made to hold the weight.

Windows

- Keep windows locked and closed when they are not being used.
- Install active barriers, such as window stops, so that windows open no more than four inches. Be sure adults and older children can easily open in the case of an emergency.
- Open windows from the top, when possible.
- Properly install an approved window screen guard. For windows above the first floor, include an emergency release device in case of fire.
- If a fall happens,
 - Stop.
 - Call 911 yourself or verbally assign a specific person to call.
 - Do **NOT** move a child that may be injured, let trained medical professionals move the child while taking the appropriate precautions.

Playground safety

Fact: Falls are the most common type of playground injury, accounting for more than 75 percent of all playground-related injuries. Lack of proper supervision is associated with approximately 45 percent of playground-related injuries.

- Dress appropriately for the playground. Remove necklaces, purses, scarves or clothing with drawstrings that can get caught on equipment and pose a strangulation hazard. Even helmets can be dangerous on a playground.
- Ensure that children use age-appropriate playground equipment. Children under five should play in areas designed for their age group.
- Playgrounds should have shock-absorbing surfaces such as rubber, sand, pea gravel, wood chips or mulch. Should your child fall, the landing will be more cushioned than on asphalt, concrete, grass or dirt.

- Surfacing should be at least 12 inches deep and extend at least six feet in all directions around stationary equipment. For swings, make sure that the surfacing extends, in the back and front, twice the height of the suspending bar.
- Your baby is ready to use the bucket-shaped swing when:
 - they can sit up without support and
 - have fairly good head control.
- If a safety hazard is noticed, stop children from playing on the equipment immediately and report it to the organization responsible for the site, such as school, park authority or city council.

Contact us

For more information, contact the Injury Prevention Program of Helen DeVos Children's Hospital at Corewell Health Grand Rapids Hospitals: **616.391.SAFE (7233)** or visit **helendevoschildrens.org/injuryprevention**