



Children's Health  
Education Center™

A member of Children's Hospital and Health System.



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# Falls

*Falls are the leading cause of  
injury among children.*

Each year, more than 100 children ages 14 and younger die, and 2.3 million are treated in emergency rooms for injuries from falls. Among children who die, more than half are ages 4 and under.

There are many different ways children are injured from falls. They can fall from windows, down stairs, off furniture, and from bikes and outdoor play equipment.

Fall-related injuries and deaths are often seasonal. Window falls peak during the spring and summer when people leave their windows open. Children also are outside playing on swing sets, jungle gyms and other playground equipment. Most playground injuries occur when children jump or fall from equipment to hard surfaces below. More than 70 percent of playground related injuries involve falls to the surface.

## Protect your child from falls at home

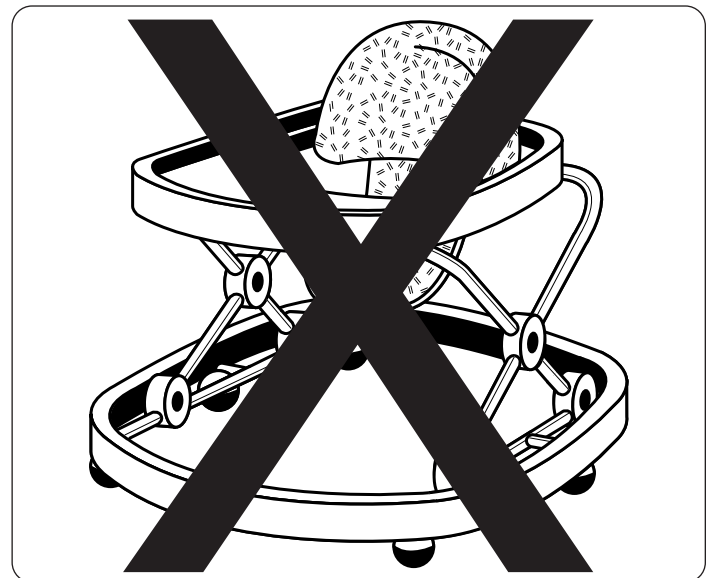
Parents and caregivers can prevent falls in the home with supervision and safety products.

Fall-related injuries in the home include:

- Infants falling from furniture and juvenile products such as changing tables, beds, sofas, highchairs and strollers. Baby walkers are especially dangerous, accounting for more injuries than any other nursery product. Most of these injuries happen when babies fall down the stairs while in walkers.
- Toddlers falling from windows, fire escapes and balconies and down stairs.
- Remember that children can fall from windows opened as little as five inches. Never rely on window screens to prevent falls.

### To prevent falls at home

- Never use baby walkers.
- Never leave young children alone on changing tables, beds, sofas or other furniture.
- Always strap children into highchairs, swings and strollers.
- Move chairs, cribs, beds and other furniture away from windows and draperies.
- Install window guards that can be opened by adults.



## Protect your child from falls at play

Outside the home, falls occur when children are at play.

- **Playgrounds:** The worst playground injuries occur when kids fall onto unsafe surfaces such as soil, grass, concrete or asphalt.
- **Bicycling:** Head injuries from falls off bicycles are the leading cause of death in bicycle-related crashes.
- **Skating:** Kids also fall when they are inline skating, skateboarding and participating in other sports.

### To prevent falls at play

- Check the surface under playground equipment. Avoid asphalt, concrete, grass and soil surfaces. Safer surfaces include mulch, pea gravel and shredded rubber at least nine to 12 inches deep and extending at least six feet in all directions around equipment. Work with local officials to clean up broken glass and trash to maintain safe playgrounds.
- Insist children wear their helmets correctly every time they ride their bikes or skates. Only buy helmets that carry a sticker indicating they meet safety standards.
- Make sure children wear protective gear including helmets, kneepads, elbow pads and wrist guards while inline skating or skateboarding. Skaters should take lessons, avoid skating at night and skate on smooth, paved surfaces free of motor vehicles.

## Protect your child from falls at home

- Never let children play alone on fire escapes, high porches or balconies.
- Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Keep hallways and stairs well lit and clear of clutter.
- Never let kids play on stairs.