

Falls in children

This page was last reviewed on November 15, 2023



Falling is a typical part of development as children walk, climb, run, jump, play and explore their environment. While most falls in children don't cause serious injury, nearly 4,500 children from birth to 14 years were admitted to a hospital as

a result of a fall in 2018. This makes falls the leading cause of hospital admissions from injury in those ages 0 to 14.

As children grow older, where they fall changes.

- Infants and young toddlers typically fall around the home

 from furniture, beds, change tables, high chairs or
 down the stairs.
- Older toddlers tend to fall while walking, running or crawling around the house.
- Children between 5 and 9 years of age most often fall at playgrounds.

In the home

Home should be a safe place for children to learn and grow. However, most fall-related injuries to children under five happen in the home. Children are vulnerable in this environment because heights, space and structures are built for adult use and comfort, often creating hazards for children. Children also have a natural curiosity about their environment and love to explore.



Here's how to fall proof your home for children.

Follow these tips to keep your kids safe from falls in the home

Get on your child's level!

Take time to get down on the ground and look around to see the world through your child's eyes to identify hazards around your home.

Buckle your child in their high chair or stroller every time.

This will prevent your child from falling out as they move, wiggle and reach.



Always set car seats and other carriers down on the floor, never on top of furniture.

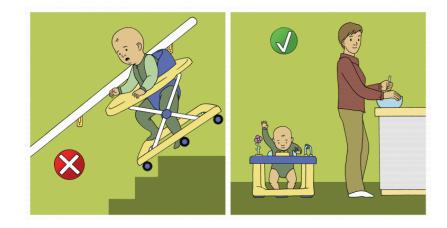


Always keep one hand on your child when they are on a high surface, such as a changing table or other furniture, to prevent them from falling to the ground.



Never use a baby walker with wheels – use stationary activity centres instead.

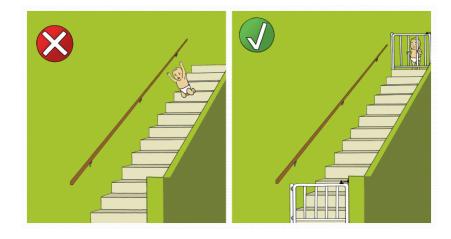
Baby walkers with wheels are banned for sale in Canada because they put children at serious risk of falling down stairs and getting to areas of the home they wouldn't normally be able to reach.



Use stair gates in your home.

• Always use hardware mount gates at the top of stairs. Pressure mount gates can be used at the bottom of stairs.

- Install gates properly, according to the manufacturer's instructions and with locking mechanisms placed on the side away from the child.
- Use the correct gates. Once your child's chin is in line with the top of the gate or when they are two years old, the gate is no longer effective.



Place all furniture away from windows and balcony door handles.

Remember, children can climb even before they are able to walk. Climbing on furniture gives children access to windows and balcony door handles where they can fall from significant heights.



Use window stops or guards and keep balcony doors locked.

- A window screen can easily tear or get pushed through if your child is pressing on it.
- Keep windows locked when possible and use window stops, which prevent windows from being opened wide enough for a child to fall through.
- Alternatively, use window guards that act as a barrier in front of the window. Make sure to use window guards that have a release mechanism so they can be fully opened in case of an emergency.
- Tenants living in apartment buildings should check with their municipality to see if there is a window safety bylaw. This may mean that a landlord must provide window stops or guards for you.

Keep stairs and high-traffic areas in your home free from clutter and tripping hazards such as toys and books.

In areas such as the bathroom and kitchen, wipe up any water or other liquid spills right away to prevent slipping.

At play

Community and backyard playgrounds are common areas where children fall as they climb and explore playground equipment. Read about what you can do and look out for in playgrounds. [https://parachute.ca/en/injury-



topic/playgrounds-and-play-spaces/]

Social factors that increase injury risk

Parachute recognizes that parents who live in low-income housing may not be able to control their environment to install safety features such as window guards or buy necessary products, such as stair gates, to decrease hazards. We decrease rates of injury when we improve people's access to health services, education, employment income, quality housing and improved social environments. Efforts to improve policies, such as banning baby walkers with wheels, are also effective in reducing or eliminating injuries for all children.

The child fall prevention scenario images on this page can be downloaded from the resource link below.

RESOURCES

ALTER – website	LINK L. +
Child fall prevention images	ZIP ± +
Child falls by Ottawa Public Health	LINK Z. +
Child Safety Link – Falls	LINK Z. +
Child safety: preventing falls (Saskatchewan Health Authority)	LINK E

Cost of injury – Falls in children infographic	PDF/UA L. +
Fall Prevention Month	LINK 12 +
Fall Proof Your Home video	VIDEO 12 +
Fall-related injuries in young children 0-6 years (2017)	PDF/UA 🖾 🕂
Home fall proof checklist	PDF/UA L. +
Keeping your children safe from falls	LINK L. +
Window fall prevention video	VIDEO 12. +

E INJURY TOPICS

Home safety	[<u>https:/</u>
Playgrounds and play spaces	topi <u>c/h</u> [<u>https:/y/</u>
	<u>topic/p</u>
	and-
← MEDIA	<u>play-</u>
	spaces,

Fall proof your home Popping the Bubble Wrap podcast — November	LINK L.
Parachute's Stephanie Cowle interviewe fall prevention after London tot dies follow balcony fall Ifpress.com – October 7, 2021	
Childhood safety advocates urge Canadian families to #FallProofYour Home June 3, 2019	NEWS RELEASE [http: released advo urge cana fami to- fallp