

Falls

Kidsafe SA Inc. | October 2017

Falls are the most common injury a child is likely to be hospitalised for, particularly in the 0-4 years age group.

Broken bones in the arms and legs are the most common type of injury from falls. Falls are also the leading cause of traumatic brain injury (head injury) in young children.

Children are more at risk of serious injury if they fall from a height greater than 2 metres. The higher the drop, the more likely it is that the injury will be severe, particularly if the ground they fall onto is hard. Childhood injuries are not usually 'accidents'. Most injuries can be predicted, and therefore prevented. It is the responsibility of adults to keep young children safe.

Why do kids fall?

Falling is a normal part of a young child's development as they learn to walk, climb, jump, run and play. Be aware of your child's developmental stage as children rapidly grow in their abilities. Fortunately, most children who fall are not injured, other than a few bruises and scrapes.

Babies

Children under 12 months of age often fall from a height due to rolling or climbing. It is important to never leave a child on their own on a change table, couch or bed. They can roll off and hurt themselves.

They can take you by surprise - one day they might not be able to roll, the next day they can. Always use a five point harness for when children are in high chairs, prams/strollers and shopping trolleys – sometimes they like to stand up or try and climb out and can fall.

Toddlers

Toddlers are top heavy and like to explore which makes them prone to falling. Children in this age group often fall from playground equipment (including trampolines), household furniture and stairs. Always watch children when they play and explore, and ensure play equipment is properly installed and that children use it as designed.

Older Children

Older children tend to fall during play, exploration, sport and leisure times. Most falls are again from playground equipment or from small wheeled devices (check out our [factsheet online](#)).

Prevention

Please use our Falls Prevention Checklist to check your home and backyard to help prevent falls. You can also find our Home Safety Checklist on the website www.kidsafesa.com.au that you can use to prevent a range of different injuries that occur within the home.

Falls Prevention Checklist

	Yes	No
Do you always supervise your child when being held by another person?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you always keep one hand on your baby when changing their nappy or clothes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you always use the parking brake on the pram, put the wrist strap on and secure your child using the 5 point harness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you always stay close to your child when they are placed on beds, tables, couches or other high places?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you keep the cot sides up and lower the base as your child grows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby walkers are associated with more injuries than any other piece of baby equipment. Baby walkers are not recommended for use. Have you considered using a stationary activity centre instead?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you always use the harness on the pram, high chair, swing, infant carrier and shopping trolley?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you teaching your child as they grow how to get off the chair or bed safely by sliding feet first?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you live in a two storey home, have you installed sturdy gates at the top and bottom of the stairs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you taught your child to use the handrails on the stairs or do you hold their hand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you installed window guards to stop your child climbing out the window?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you check if playground equipment is safe and in good condition before allowing your child to play?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you always supervise your child at the playground or when they are on the trampoline?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is only one child allowed to use the trampoline at a time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you checked that the springs and padding on the trampoline are in good condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you set up your trampoline on a flat surface with bark, mulch or soft grass underneath?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your child's bike the right size for them and in good condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your child always wear a correctly fitted and secured helmet when riding a bike, scooter or skateboard or when they are sitting on a rear mounted seat when on an adult bike?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If your child has a tree they like to climb, have you taught them how to climb up and down safely and do you make sure that you always supervise?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your child use a bunk bed? Bunkbeds can cause nasty falls – they are not recommended for use with children under 9 years old.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some children like to climb! Is your furniture (bookshelves, cupboards and drawers) and TV secured to the wall or cabinet using brackets or anchors so they don't topple on children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Kidsafe SA is here to assist you. This is general information and if you require specific advice please contact us to discuss further.

For more information contact Kidsafe SA:
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