

# Computer-related injuries on the rise

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While back pain, blurred vision and mouse-related injuries are now well-documented hazards of long-term computer use, the number of acute injuries connected to computers is rising rapidly. According to a study published in the July 2009 issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, researchers from the Center for Injury Research and Policy and The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital; and The Ohio State University College of Medicine, Columbus have found a more-than-sevenfold increase in computer-related injuries due to tripping over computer equipment, head injuries due to computer monitor falls and other physical incidents.

According to data from the National Electronic [Injury](#) Surveillance System database, over 78,000 cases of acute computer-related injuries were treated in U.S. emergency departments from 1994 through 2006. Approximately 93% of injuries occurred at home. The number of acute computer-related injuries increased by 732% over the 13-year study period, which is more than double the increase in household computer ownership (309%).

Injury mechanisms included hitting against or catching on computer equipment; tripping or falling over computer equipment; computer equipment falling on top of the patient; and the straining of muscles or joints. The computer part most often associated with injuries was the monitor. The percentage of monitor-related cases increased significantly, from 11.6% in 1994 to a peak of 37.1% in 2003. By 2006, it had decreased to 25.1%. The decrease since 2003 corresponds to the replacement of heavier cathode ray tube (CRT) monitors with smaller

and easier-to-lift liquid crystal display (LCD) monitors.

Children aged

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