

Thousands of kids injured in furniture accidents

May 5 2011, By Susan Rzucidlo

In the winter months, more injuries occur in the home as children and their families are indoors for longer periods. In 2007, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) identified injuries from furniture tip-overs as one of the top five hidden home hazards. The CPSC estimates that between 2000 and 2006 there were at least 180 deaths related to tip-overs of furniture, televisions, or appliances. Eighty percent of these deaths involved children younger than age 10.

Several [children](#) are treated at the Pediatric Level 1 Trauma Center at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital each month for injuries resulting from [furniture](#) tip-overs or falls from furniture.

“Kids can be seriously injured or killed as a result of climbing onto, falling against, or pulling themselves up on shelves, bookcases, dressers, TV tables and other furniture,” said Susan Rzucidlo, M.S.N., R.N., manager of Pediatric Trauma and Injury Prevention Program and coordinator of Safe Kids Dauphin County at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital.

Safe Kids Dauphin County offers some tips to prevent injuries from furniture:

- Keep heavier items on lower shelves or in lower drawers.
- Don't keep remote controls, candy, or other tempting items on unstable stands or tables.
- Tie up loose cords — a child pulling on an electrical cord, or tripping

over one, could pull an appliance off a stand.

- Teach children not to climb or jump on furniture.
- Push the TV as far back as possible from the front of its stand.
- Don't leave young children unattended on a bed or changing table.

Kids also are in danger of suffocation if they become accidentally trapped in a cabinet, toy chest, or laundry machine. In 2007 alone, there were 3,270 injuries to children ages 2 to 14 involving toy chests.

Toy chests that meet voluntary standards set by the CPSC are equipped with lid supports that hold the lid open in any position. The standards also call for ventilation holes to prevent suffocation. If you have a toy chest with a lid that doesn't stay open, the CPSC recommends you remove the lid or install a spring-loaded lid support.

“These are not hazards that kill thousands of children every year, like vehicle crashes or drowning, but they are so easy to prevent and the consequences can be so severe,” said Rzucidlo. “Don't underestimate the possibility of a small child being crushed by unsteady furniture.

Three and a half-year-old Katie Lambert died tragically as a result of a furniture tip-over accident in her Pennsylvania home. Her family has become advocates for protecting other children from accidental injury or [death](#). Katie's story is excerpted on the website her parents created in her memory. For an in-depth home safety checklist, please go to katieeliselambert.org.

Provided by Pennsylvania State University

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