

Preventing pediatric falls

May 15 2024, by Sonya Goins, Mayo Clinic News Network



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May is National Trauma Awareness Month. It's a time to spread awareness about injury prevention and trauma.

Falls are the No. 1 cause of nonfatal injuries among children up to 14

years old in the U.S., according to the National Institutes of Health. Many of these pediatric falls happen at home or on the playground.

Tom Halada, a Mayo Clinic registered nurse and pediatric trauma coordinator, says some of these injuries can be prevented.

Each year, more than 2 million children are seen in the [emergency department](#) in the U.S. because of [fall-related injuries](#).

"The injuries can vary widely, and it's somewhat dependent on the age range for the patient," says Halada.

Infants and toddlers often get hurt tumbling off beds and changing tables. Windows and stairs can also lead to unintentional bumps and bruises.

"One way to prevent falls around the home would be to make sure that you have properly installed safety gates for your stairs and guards for the window," explains Halada.

Bigger kids sometimes end up at the hospital because of injuries related to biking, roller-skating and other [recreational activities](#).

"Participation in any activity, you would want to make sure that the child is wearing correct and properly sized protective equipment, such as helmet, knee pads, elbow guards, wrist guards," says Halada.

Vigilant adult supervision can help reduce falls and accidents in children.

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- Move furniture away from windows to prevent climbing.
- Strap babies in high chairs, swings and strollers.

- Never leave a child alone in a shopping cart.
- Keep windows locked and closed when not in use.
- Create safe play areas.
- Childproof home.
- Always supervise young [children](#).

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Citation: Preventing pediatric falls (2024, May 15) retrieved 20 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-05-pediatric-falls.html>

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