

Stair Safety



Stairs are a common source of injury among children. In fact, on average, every 6 minutes a child younger than 5 years is treated for a stair-related injury in a US emergency department. Taking a few simple steps can help prevent these injuries.

Injury Prevention Tips

- Avoid carrying a child on the stairs when possible. Place him in a safe place, such as a crib, when you need to use the stairs.
- When you need to carry a child on the stairs:
 - Avoid carrying other items. The child should be the only thing in your arms.
 - Keep one hand on the handrail to help prevent a fall in case you trip or slip.
 - Make sure the child is in your arms and not in a stroller or carriage while on the stairs.
- Do not let your child use a baby walker.
- When a child begins to use stairs on his own, teach him:
 - to always have a free hand to hold onto the handrail.
 - to ask an adult for help if he wants to take something up or down stairs.
 - to keep his toys off of the stairs.
 - to not play or jump on stairs.

Creating Safe Stairways

- Keep stairs free of clutter and in good repair.
- Install a handrail if one is not available.
 - Handrails that are small enough for you to be able to put your whole hand around are best.
- Use stair gates both at the top and at the bottom of stairs.
 - Built-in, wall-mounted gates are best.
 - Only use wall-mounted gates at the top of stairs. Pressure mounted gates can be knocked over allowing the child to fall down the stairs.
 - While important and effective, remember that stair gates are not a substitute for adult supervision.

