

FACT SHEET

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

BABY WALKERS

- Baby walkers account for more injuries to young children than any other nursery product.
- In one recent year, 22,500 children were treated in hospital emergency rooms due to injuries involving baby walkers.
- Most injuries result from babies in walkers falling down stair cases.
- Injuries range from cuts and bruises to concussions and skull fractures. One 10-month-old child in a walker suffered permanent brain damage when he pulled open a gate and fell down a staircase before his grandmother could get to him. A 6 ½-month-old child suffered a crushed skull and a brain hemorrhage when he fell down basement steps in his walker.
- Most incidents occurred during normal use of the product. In most cases, the caregiver was in the same room as the child in the walker.
- The commission had a number of options, including banning baby walkers, but that would have taken years of costly litigation and allowed injuries to continue to increase. Instead of a new regulation, the Consumer Product Safety Commission sought a voluntary, less costly solution to reduce these injuries. By working out a new voluntary standard, CPSC is saving taxpayer dollars, and making baby walkers safer now so we can begin preventing injuries to children immediately.
- CPSC worked with manufacturers to come up with a new voluntary standard so that walkers are equipped with a feature that will stop them before they can tumble down a staircase. The industry is also designing new stationary models so that parents have a choice. Walkers meeting the new standard will be certified by the Juvenile Products Manufacturing Association (JPMA). No retailer will sell a walker without JPMA's seal.
- CPSC estimates that the new standard will reduce injuries to about 10,000 by 2002, a reduction of more than 55%. If no action were taken, CPSC estimates that baby walker injuries would increase to as many as 32,000 by 2002.

Tomorrow, on Mother's Day, families across America will honor their mothers. Our mothers nurture us, encourage us, teach us, keep us safe, and bind our families together with their strength.

Government can help families by keeping the economy strong and creating an environment that helps them thrive.

One of the most important responsibilities of the federal government is to help keep families -- and especially children -- safe in their homes. Parents need to know that the products they buy and use every day in their homes are safe.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is a small federal agency that has been working to keep families safe for 25 years, and has built a solid record of results for the American people. As we celebrate Mother's Day, CPSC will celebrate its 25th anniversary. CPSC's 25 years of work has resulted in a 25-percent decline in the rate of injuries from consumer products and a 32-percent decline in the rate of death. That is indeed a success rate to be proud of.

And the Consumer Product Safety Commission is working to build on that success in the future. Today, I am announcing a new standard initiated by the CPSC to reduce injuries and deaths to children

-more-

involving baby walkers. Did you know that more young children are injured in baby walkers than by any other nursery product? In one recent year, 22,500 children were treated in hospital emergency rooms because of injuries associated with these walkers. The injuries range from bruises, to concussions, to skull fractures, to permanent brain damage.

The most common cause of the injuries -- and the most terrifying for parents -- is a fall down stairs. The new standard requires walkers that cannot tumble down a staircase. New stationary designs are also available, so parents have a choice.

I am pleased to say that this new standard was achieved without passage of a new law, without the addition of more regulation, and without more red tape. This new safety standard, which will prevent injuries to thousands of children, was achieved through cooperation between government and industry.

Instead of a new government regulation for baby walkers, CPSC sought an effective, less costly solution. Commission Chairman Ann Brown worked with manufacturers to come up with a voluntary standard that will prevent these needless injuries.

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The safety of baby walkers is just one of the important responsibilities of the CPSC in helping to prevent injuries and deaths to children.

Everyone remembers their favorite toy from childhood. It's the Consumer Product Safety Commission that ensures toys meet tough federal safety requirements. Last year, the Commission worked with the U.S. Customs Service to confiscate more than two million toys that violated U.S. safety laws, preventing them from ever reaching store shelves. Stringent CPSC regulations prohibit small parts on certain toys that may choke a young child. Those laws also ensure that toys that may be dangerous for our youngest children are clearly labeled to help parents make the right toy-buying decisions.

One of the first safety areas CPSC dealt with in the early 1970s was the high incidence of accidental poisonings involving young children. Since the passage of strict laws requiring child-resistant packaging for medications, the lives of more than 800 kids have been saved. In 1972, 216 children died after swallowing medications, including household aspirin. Since the enactment of child-resistant packaging laws, that number has dropped by nearly 90%.

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In 1973, it's estimated that as many as 200 infants died annually in the United States from injuries associated with baby cribs. Many of these deaths happened when children were trapped and strangled in the spaces between the slats of the crib. From its inception, CPSC began working on standards to improve crib safety and reduce these deaths. Despite increases in the population of infants and young children, annual deaths have been reduced by 75%, and the cribs on store shelves today are much safer.

Because of the efforts of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, mothers have a little more piece of mind when they give their children a toy, or tuck them into bed at night. The hard work of the federal employees at the CPSC over the last 25 years makes the demanding job of being a mother a little easier.

So today, as we celebrate Mother's Day, I also want to congratulate the Consumer Product Safety Commission on 25 years of helping to keep our families safer in their homes.

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They also took a
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- In one recent year, 22,500 children were treated in hospital emergency rooms due to injuries involving baby walkers.
- Most injuries result from babies in walkers falling down stair cases.
- Injuries range from cuts and bruises to concussions and skull fractures. One 10-month-old child in a walker suffered permanent brain damage when he pulled open a gate and fell down a staircase before his grandmother could get to him. A 6 ½-month-old child suffered a crushed skull and a brain hemorrhage when he fell down basement steps in his walker.
- Most incidents occurred during normal use of the product. In most cases, the caregiver was in the same room as the child in the walker.
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One of the first safety areas CPSC dealt with in the early 1970s was the high incidence of accidental poisonings involving young children. Since the passage of strict laws requiring child-resistant packaging for medications, the lives of more than 800 kids have been saved. In 1972, 216 children died after swallowing medications, including household aspirin. Since the enactment of child-resistant packaging laws, that number has dropped by nearly 90%.

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Because of the efforts of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, mothers have a little more piece of mind when they give their children a toy, or tuck them into bed at night. The hard work of the federal employees at the CPSC over the last 25 years makes the demanding job of being a mother a little easier.

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Public Affairs Office
U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20207
WEB SITE: www.cpsc.gov

Date: 4-28-98 Time: _____ a.m./p.m.

To: 10M FREEDMAN

Organization: _____

Voice: _____ Fax: 202 456-7431

Subject: _____

From: KATHLEEN BEGALA

Voice: (301) 504-0580 Ext. _____ Fax: (301) 504-0862 or (301) 504-0399

Pages (including cover sheet): 6

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NOTE:

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Public Affairs Office
U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20207
WEB SITE: www.cpsc.gov

Date: 4-29-98 Time: _____ a.m./p.m.

To: TOM FREEDMAN

Organization: _____

Voice: _____ Fax: 202 456-7431

Subject: _____

From: KATHLEEN BEGALA

Voice: (301) 504-0580 Ext. _____ Fax: (301) 504-0862 or (301) 504-0399

Pages (including cover sheet): 2

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NOTE:

Tom,
This is a new sheet w/ additional
info on baby walkers.