



Home Fall Prevention for Children Ages Five to Nine Years

Each day in New York State (NYS), an average of 90 children ages five to nine years are treated for an injury at a hospital because of an unintentional fall; an average of three children are injured severely enough to require hospitalization.

Falls are the leading cause of injury-related hospitalizations and hospital emergency department visits for children ages 14 years and younger in NYS.

The good news is that **you**, as a parent or caregiver, can play a major role in preventing home fall injuries.

What are the most common causes of falls?

- The majority of child falls occur at home. The most common causes of fall-related injuries for children at this age are slipping, tripping, and stumbling, falling out of bed or down stairs or from another high surface.

How can I help prevent my child from falling down the stairs?

- Teach your child important home safety rules, like using handrails when walking up or down stairs and keeping their shoelaces tied.
- Keep stairs free from clutter.

What types of features can help make windows safer?

- All windows above the first floor should have locks and operable window guards. Window screens alone are not strong enough to keep a child from falling out a window.
- Window guards prevent the window from being opened more than four inches. They can be removed in case of fire. It is possible for a child to fit through an opening as small as five inches.

How can I make my bathtub safer?

- Place slip-resistant mats or stickers on the bottom of your bathtub and shower so the floor is not as slippery.

What are some other safety tips?

- Safety belts and straps should always be used when available, especially in child safety seats.
- Secure area rugs so your child cannot trip on them.
- Children should wear footwear that fits properly and is slip-resistant, such as sneakers.
- Teach your child not to climb on furniture and counters as well as hazards outside the home, such as trees.
- Place furniture away from windows and anchor each piece to the wall (especially television sets). Young children love to climb on furniture and use drawers and shelves as steps. They may also be influenced by older children to do dangerous stunts on your furniture.
- Do not put toys or items that may interest children on the top of furniture.

Where can I find more information about home safety?

- American Academy of Pediatrics (www.healthychildren.org)
- Home Safety Council (<http://www.homesafetycouncil.org>)
- Safe Kids USA (www.usa.safekids.org)
- U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (www.cpsc.gov)