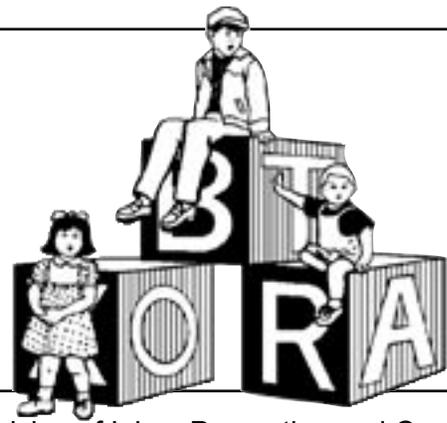


Building Blocks to Safety

*A newsletter for prevention
of childhood injuries*



North Dakota Department of Health

Winter 2003

Division of Injury Prevention and Control

Bunk Bed Safety

Each year, thousands of children younger than 15 receive hospital emergency room treatment for injuries associated with bunk beds. Most of these injuries are fairly minor and occur when children fall from the beds. Horseplay frequently contributes to these injuries. There are other less obvious, yet potentially very serious, hazards associated with bunk bed structures that have entrapped children and resulted in suffocation or strangulation deaths. These hazards include guardrail spacing, use of the bed without rails on both sides, dislodgement of mattress foundation and using the wrong size mattress.

Guardrail spacing — On some beds, the space between the guardrail and mattress or the bed frame and mattress is large enough to allow a young child to slip through. Deaths have occurred when children became suspended by the head in these spaces and strangled.

Guardrails that are attached to the bed by hooks and remain in place by their own weight can dislodge, allowing a child to fall or become entrapped under the guardrail.

Use of the bed without rails on both sides — Most bunk beds are used with one side located against a wall and are sold with only one guardrail for the upper bunk to prevent falls from the side away from the wall. Deaths have occurred when very young children rolled off the bed and became entrapped between the wall and the side of the bed without a guardrail. This hazard is not unique to bunk beds. Regular beds can present the same hazard.



Dislodgement of mattress foundation — The mattress foundation on some bunk beds merely rests on small ledges attached to the bed frame. They can dislodge, particularly if a child underneath the bunk pushes or kicks upwards on the mattress. Suffocation deaths have occurred when mattress foundations fell on children playing on the floor or occupying the lower bunk.

Wrong-size mattress — Bunk bed structures and mattresses come in two lengths—regular and extra long. Extra long is 5 inches longer than regular. Therefore, if a regular-length mattress is purchased for an extra-long bed, there can be a 5-inch opening between the mattress and headboard or footboard. Strangulation deaths have occurred when children fell through openings created between the mattress and headboard or footboard when a regular-length mattress was used in an extra-long bed frame.

Bunk bed safety suggestions:

- Always use two side guardrails on the upper bunk. Keep guardrails securely in place at all times whatever the age of the child. Children move about during sleep and may roll out of bed.

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Bunk Bed Safety con't

- Do not permit children younger than 6 to sleep in the upper bunk.
- Be sure cross ties are under the mattress foundation of each bed and that they are secured in place even if bunks are used as twin beds.
- Emphasize to children to use the ladder and not chairs or other pieces of furniture to climb into or out of the top bunk.
- Teach children that rough play is unsafe around and on beds and other furniture.
- Consider using a night-light so that children will be able to see the ladder if they get up during the night.

Maintenance or safety repair:

- If spacing between guardrails and bed frames is more than 3 1/2 inches, nail or screw another rail to close the space to prevent head entrapment.
- Keep guardrails in good repair and securely in place.
- Replace loose or missing ladder rungs immediately.
- Repair or replace loose or missing hardware, including cross ties, immediately.

Yo-Yo Toys Risky

The CPSC believes there is a low but potential risk of strangulation from the yo-yo water ball toy. The toys are made of rubber-like material and consist of a liquid-filled ball with a stretchy cord that has a small finger loop at the end. The stretchy cord of the toy can wrap around a child's neck when the child swings the toy overhead like a lasso. Parents who are concerned about this risk could, in addition to supervising the use of this toy closely, cut the cord off (leaving a squishy toy ball for children to play with) or throw the toy away.

The CPSC has received 186 reports of incidents in which the yo-yo ball toy's cord wrapped around a child's neck. In all cases, a parent or child successfully removed the cord from the child's neck. Although there were no



lasting injuries, seven cases reported broken blood vessels affecting eyes, eyelids, cheeks, neck and scalp.

CPSC is aware that some major retailers (for example, Toys R Us, Walgreen's and Saks) have stopped selling the yo-yo ball toys.

Segways Recalled

CPSC and Segway LLC are recalling 6,000 Segway human transporters. Under certain operating conditions, particularly when the batteries are near the end of charge, some transporters may not deliver enough power, allowing the rider to fall. This can happen if the rider speeds up abruptly, encounters an obstacle or continues to ride after receiving a low-battery alert. CPSC has received three reports of falls that may be related to this condition.

The recall involves all Segway human transporters. The transporters were sold directly from Segway. Consumers should call Segway at 877.889.9020 for information about how to receive a free software upgrade.



Visit the following websites for more information about product safety and injury prevention:

www.cpsc.gov

www.health.state.nd.us

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www.ndmch.com/injury-prevention/publications.asp



Snow Blower Safety

According to the CPSC, snow blower injuries are the fourth leading cause of finger amputations due to consumer products. There are more than 1,000 amputations and 5,000 hospital emergency room-related injuries per year associated with snow blowers. Injuries occurred most frequently when consumers tried to clear the auger/collector of the discharge chute with their hand.

To prevent snow blower injuries, follow these suggested safety tips:

- Review the operator's manual before use; inexperience causes increased risk of injury.
- Never leave a snow blower unattended when the engine is running. Shut down the engine if you must leave the machine for any length of time.
- Never leave the machine running in an enclosed area, such as a garage with the door closed.
- Never let children operate snow blowers. Keep kids younger than 15 away when snow blowers are in use.
- Know how to stop the snow blower quickly.
- If the snow blower becomes jammed, turn it off, disengage the clutch and wait more than five seconds for blades to stop moving.
- Beware of the brief recoil of motor and blades that occurs after the machine has been turned off.
- Do not remove safety devices, shields or guards on switches, and keep hands and feet away from moving parts.
- Plan a route before you start. Clear the area of any debris and rocks before you begin snow removal.

Graco Play Yard Update

The CPSC and Graco are providing new instructions for about 538,000 "Pack'n Play" portable play yards with raised changing tables. When children are placed in these portable play yards with the changing table in place, they can crawl under and lift the table up. If this occurs, a child's head and neck can become trapped between the changing table and the play-yard rail, causing a strangulation hazard. The recall is designed to warn consumers of this hazard and to provide warning labels to be placed on the changing tables. The commission and Graco are aware of the death of a 13-month-old girl who strangled when her neck became trapped between the rail and the raised changing table.

Play yards with the following model numbers are included in the recall: 2016, 35235, or model numbers that begin with 9531 or 9533. The model number can be found on a label on the white plastic center cone under the play yard.

Discount, department and juvenile stores nationwide sold these portable play yards from October 2001 through September 2003. Consumers should never place children in these portable play yards when the changing table is still in place. Consumers should contact Graco at 800.233.1546 to receive a free warning label for the changing table.



Pet Me Platypus Toy Recalled

CPSC and Neurosmith are recalling the Pet Me Platypus musical plush toy. The four plastic button covers can detach, posing a choking hazard.

Pet Me Platypus is a musical plush toy with a green head, yellow beak and legs, and blue body. The recalled units have model number 42080 engraved on the battery box cover and batch numbers FV23, FV24, FV25, FV27, FV28, FV29 or FV30 printed vertically on the right side of the cover.

The toy was sold exclusively at Target stores

nationwide from August 2003 through October 2003.

Consumers should stop children from playing with this toy and contact

Neurosmith at 800.220.3669, extension 1066, for a free replacement Pet Me Platypus.



Bunk Beds Recalled

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and Home Line Industries are recalling 3,600 bunk beds. The bunk beds have openings between the guardrails and end structures that are too large. A child's body could slide between the openings and become trapped by the child's head. This poses a strangulation hazard.

The recalled bunk beds come in three colors and have three designs. The designs include a double or single bed on the bottom or a double bed that can convert into a couch. Some units are labeled with the Home Line name on the top front railing.

Furniture stores nationwide sold these beds Sept. 2002 through May 2003. Consumers should stop

using this product immediately and call Home Line Industries at 800.523.3310 to arrange for a free repair.

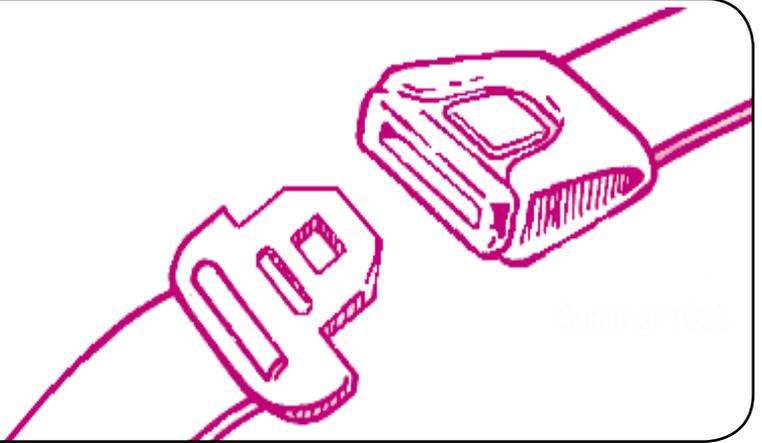


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The Buckle Update



Britax Super Elite Child Restraint Recalled

Britax Child Safety Inc. is conducting a voluntary recall on a small number of Super Elite child restraints. It was determined that some of the affected restraints may not meet the safety standard for head excursion. The affected Super Elites were manufactured between April 25, 2001, and Feb. 15, 2002.

Britax is repairing the recall by providing owners with a harness replacement kit that includes a metal yoke on the adjuster, a HUGS strap cover, chest clip and comfort pad. Seats made after Feb. 15, 2002, have these parts as standard equipment.

The affected seats should not be returned to the Britax retailer since the retailers do not have access to the replacement harness. Consumers should contact Britax at 888.4BRITAX (888.427.4829). They will need to provide their name, address, daytime telephone number, manufacturing date, and batch of the Super Elite. This information is located on the label on the back of the restraint.

Sit'n-Stroll Child Restraint Recalled

Safeline Kids Inc. is performing a voluntary informational recall of about 10,495 units of the Sit'n'Stroll child restraint model 2003 manufactured between Sept. 1, 2002 and Oct. 21, 2003.

When the child restraint is secured in the vehicle using the lower forward-facing belt path or when the shoulder and buckle pads are used, the restraint may not meet the safety standard for head excursion.

Owners should continue using the Sit'n'Stroll but must remove and discard the shoulder and buckle pads provided with the restraint. Owners are also instructed to use only the upper forward-facing belt path when the restraint is installed forward-facing for children weighing between 20 pounds and 40 pounds.

A replacement label and revised instruction manual can be requested from Safeline Kids Inc. by calling 800.829.1625 or emailing the company at service@safelineskids.com.



Questions and Answers About LATCH

Sept. 1, 2002, marked a milestone in child passenger safety with the advent of LATCH (**L**ower **A**nchors and **T**ethers for **C**hildren). LATCH is the new way to anchor child car safety seats in motor vehicles without the use of vehicle seat belts. The LATCH System in a vehicle includes two lower anchors and an upper (tether) anchor. The LATCH system for a car safety seat includes two lower attachments that snap into the vehicle lower anchors and an upper attachment called a tether strap that hooks onto the upper anchor in the vehicle.

According to child passenger safety technicians, the most commonly asked questions about LATCH are:

Q – Is the LATCH system or the safety belt preferred to secure a child restraint in a vehicle?

A – For vehicles with LATCH anchors, try the LATCH installation first. Use the vehicle seat belt if you cannot get a tight fit with LATCH (less than one inch of movement toward the front or side.)

Q – Can you use both the LATCH anchors and the seat belt to secure a child restraint?

A – While some parents believe that using both LATCH and the seat belt helps assure a more secure fit, the restraints have not been tested using both systems. **Either** the LATCH anchors **or** the seat belt should be used to secure the restraint.

Q – If LATCH is available only in the vehicle outboard positions, can you place the child restraint in the center and use the inner LATCH bars?

A – You **must** check the vehicle owner’s manual to

see if the manufacturer allows this practice. If the manual does not specifically say that you may place the child restraint in the center and attach it to the inner LATCH bars, then it should not be done. The options would be to use LATCH in the outboard or the seat belt in the center.



Evenflo Reverses Warning About Fold-Down Armrests

For many years, manufacturer’s instructions for Evenflo infant and rear-facing convertible seats have stated that the seat should not be installed in the center rear with a fold-down armrest. Evenflo has reversed its position with the following statement:

“Fold-down armrests could pose a hazard to a rear-facing child in certain types of collisions. Consult your vehicle owner’s manual before installing any rear-facing child restraint in front of a fold-down armrest.”

According to Evenflo, the new instruction should be considered retroactive to cover all earlier products.

