

## LEADING CAUSES - FALLS

### Ohio Data

- Falls are the overall leading cause of injury-related emergency room (ER) visits and hospital admissions among Ohio youth younger than 14.<sup>1</sup>

**Average Annual Number of Fall-related Hospital Admissions and Emergency Room Visits for Children Aged 1 to 14, by Age Group, Ohio, 2002-05<sup>1</sup>**

Fall-related Injury	1 to 4	5 to 14	Ages 1 to 14 Total
ER Visits	18,905	32,996	51,900
Hospital Inpatients	143	346	489

<sup>1</sup>Source: Ohio Hospital Association

- From 2002 to 2005, Ohio children aged 1 to 4 years had higher fall-related ER visit rates than any other age group until ages 85, while older male children aged 5 to 14 accounted for the greatest number of fall-related ER visits among all ages during this time.<sup>1</sup>
- Although falls are among the most common causes of child injury, fortunately few falls among children result in death. When they do, it is usually due to a fall from a great height (22 or more feet) or the child's head hitting a hard surface (e.g., concrete).
- Falls can and do result in serious injuries, such as traumatic brain injury, or TBI. Physical characteristics, such as a proportionally larger head and high center of gravity, put young children at higher risk for TBIs when they fall.
  - TBIs were diagnosed in approximately 40 percent of the fall-related hospitalizations of children aged 1 to 4 years and 22 percent of children aged 5 to 14 years in Ohio from 2002-05.<sup>1</sup>
- As with other injuries, the risk for fatal falls is greater during the summer time because children are more likely to be playing outside, engaging in sports and recreational activities. In addition, windows are more likely to be open, increasing a young child's risk for a fall from a window. Fatal fall rates increase 21 percent above the monthly average during the summer months.<sup>2</sup>
- Risk for type of fall varies a great deal by age group and developmental level:
  - Toddlers fall down stairs, from furniture, buildings (i.e., windows, balconies) and from playground equipment.
  - Older children fall from playground equipment (climbing equipment, slides, swings), and slip, trip and stumble during sports and recreation (skate boards, roller skates, and scooters, etc.).
  - Teenagers and young adults fall during sports, recreation.
- On average each year in Ohio, nearly 33,000 children aged 5-14 years are treated in ERs for fall-related injuries.<sup>1</sup> Among these, about one in four of these ER visits is the result of a fall

from playground equipment or during sports and other recreational activities(e.g., non-motorized scooters, skateboards and roller-skates).<sup>1</sup>

- On average each year, 111 Ohio children are admitted as inpatients due to falls from playground equipment and during sports and other recreational activities. Male children are at greater risk for sports and recreation fall-related injury serious enough to require ER treatment and hospital admission.<sup>1</sup>

**Sources:**

<sup>1</sup>*Ohio Hospital Association*

<sup>2</sup>*Safe Kids US Summer Safety Ranking Report*

## Parents and Caregivers: Prevent Falls!

The following are tips that can be used to prevent children from sustaining injuries related to falls:

- **Play safely.** Check to make sure playground equipment your child uses is properly designed, age appropriate and maintained and there's a safe, soft landing surface below. *\*Please note: No helmets on playgrounds. They can be a strangulation hazard.*
- **Make sure your home playground is safe.** Keep 12 inches safe surfacing, such as mulch, shredded rubber or fine sand, extending at least six feet in all directions around the equipment.
- **Make home safety improvements.** Use home safety devices, such as guards on windows that are above ground level, stair gates, and guard rails. These devices can help keep a busy, active child from taking a dangerous tumble. Keep chairs, cribs, and other furniture away from windows.
- **Keep sports safe.** Make sure your child wears protective gear when playing active sports, such as wrist guards, knee and elbow pads, and a helmet when in-line skating.
- **Supervision is key.** Supervise young children at all times around fall hazards, such as stairs and playground equipment, whether you're at home or out to play.

<sup>1</sup>*Source: CDC Protect the Ones you Love*

## For more Information on Falls

- [CDC: Protect the Ones you Love from Falls](http://www.cdc.gov/SafeChild/Falls/default.htm) <http://www.cdc.gov/SafeChild/Falls/default.htm>
- [Safe Kids USA - Falls](http://www.usa.safekids.org/tier3_cd.cfm?folder_id=540&content_item_id=1050)  
[http://www.usa.safekids.org/tier3\\_cd.cfm?folder\\_id=540&content\\_item\\_id=1050](http://www.usa.safekids.org/tier3_cd.cfm?folder_id=540&content_item_id=1050)
- [National Program for Playground Safety](http://www.uni.edu/playground/) <http://www.uni.edu/playground/>
- [Home Safety Council](http://www.homesafetycouncil.org/index.asp) <http://www.homesafetycouncil.org/index.asp>