



TV Safety

Is Your Television Putting Your Child in Danger?

When parents consider possible child safety hazards in their homes, a few usual suspects come to mind: the stove, the bathtub, cleaning supplies or sharp corners on the coffee table. It's easy to miss the danger of an object like a television or a large chest of drawers, but what happens if the chest of drawers gets knocked over or the wall-mounted television falls off the wall?

Hospitals all over the country are seeing a rise in child deaths and traumatic injuries from falling or tipped-over furniture - and the problem is showing up right here in Houston. "We have seen more deaths from falling televisions in the past eight months than we have in the last four years," says Dr. Charles Cox, pediatric surgeon and co-director of the Texas Trauma Institute at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center and Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital.

Facts and Statistics on TV Safety

In the last decade, 245 children under the age of 8 have died from furniture tipping over, and the overwhelming majority of these deaths were caused by improperly secured televisions. Additionally, falling furniture has become a major cause of child injury. Researchers estimate over 22,000 children are sent to the emergency room each year from avoidable accidents caused by unstable furniture or televisions.

Since January 2012, eight children have been brought to the Texas Trauma Institute after experiencing a furniture injury. Five patients sustained serious injuries to the head, arm or leg, and three of these children died.

"This is a small number out of all the trauma cases we see each year," says Dr. Cox. "But this problem is entirely preventable. It is important for parents and caregivers to be aware of the dangers unstable furniture and televisions pose to young children, and it is crucial these items are properly secured to the wall."

(over)

What You Can Do To Prevent TV Injuries:

1. Check that your furniture is stable and the appropriate size for your TV.
2. Do not place a TV on furniture that children can climb on as steps, such as a chest of drawers.
3. Install anchors when mounting TV to the wall or when securing furniture.
4. Keep tempting items off of furniture that might entice a child to climb.
5. Place electrical cords out of reach.

Necessary Precautions

It only takes a moment for a child to be in danger. Every parent can avoid a fatal television accident by implementing a few important safety measures universally recommended by pediatricians and top medical journals. Parents and caregivers should always:

- Ensure all furniture is stable on its own, even with all of the drawers pulled out.
- Use this test for each piece of large furniture: If your child tries to climb it, would it fall over? If the answer is yes, take measures to secure the furniture to the ground or wall.
- Encourage children not to play in close proximity to televisions or any other large piece of furniture that could be knocked over.
- Use appropriate straps or wall mounts to properly secure televisions to the wall. Identify studs in the wall and attach mounts only to studs, ensuring the stud can support the added weight.
- Always attach entertainment units, TV stands, bookcases, shelving and dressers to the wall or floor using brackets, screws or toggles.
- Never place a TV on a piece of furniture that children can climb on as steps, such as a chest of drawers.
- If your television is on a stand, place it as far back on the stand as possible, away from your child's reach.
- Do not place remote controls, DVDs, toys or other attractive items on or near the TV, where your child might be tempted to reach them.
- Hide or secure all television and cable cords out of the reach of children and teach them not to play with the cords.

About the Texas Trauma Institute

For families in the Gulf Coast region, The Texas Trauma Institute works around the clock to save lives and advance the field of emergency medicine. Our Adult and Children's Transport Teams operate within a 300-mile radius of Houston using ground ambulance, a 150-mile radius using the 24/7 Life Flight[®] air ambulance and far beyond using private jet services. As the first hospital in Texas to give blood transfusions during transport, we understand every second counts. We have dedicated ourselves to providing the highest possible level of care while patients are en route to Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center.

Once patients arrive at Memorial Hermann-TMC, they enter our Level I Texas Trauma Institute with the only verified burn center in Houston as well as the full expert support of a multidisciplinary team of skilled physicians affiliated with the 12-hospital Memorial Hermann system. Each year, the Institute treats more than 14,000 adult and pediatric patients and has become one of the busiest and most respected trauma centers in the nation.

The Texas Trauma Institute maintains a deep commitment to improving the safety of life in our city. As part of this commitment, the Institute has initiated a collaborative prevention program both onsite at Memorial Hermann-TMC as well as throughout Houston communities. Through educating caregivers on common and preventable safety hazards, we hope to create a safer future for Houston children and families.



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