



[Protecting Your Young Children Against Head Injuries](#)

by [John Demas](#) on 02/11/09 at 1:40 pm

As most parents know, it only takes a few seconds of unsupervised play for a child to sustain a [serious head injury](#) or even death. In fact, two local children were recently hit by cars while playing on their sleds. While one child sustained only minor injuries, the other youth is battling serious head trauma. Just two years ago, a child in Truckee died as a result of a sledding accident. [Click here to read article.](#)

Two of the most common types of [head injuries](#) sustained by young children are concussions and contusions. The government Web site Medline defines a concussion as “a [brain injury](#) that may result in a bad headache or unconsciousness.” [Click here to read more.](#) A contusion is simply described as a bruise on the brain. [Click here to read article.](#) (Other types of serious head injuries will be discussed in future articles).

Concerned parents must constantly ask themselves how they can best protect their children and those who play with them. The following list of suggestions, although not exhaustive, will provide you with some important safety tips.

- Always provide adequate adult supervision of your children. Don't hesitate to ask other parents for help if you'll be in charge of more visiting children than you think you can safely watch. Provide proper warnings to your children about all potentially dangerous activities - without unnecessarily frightening them.
- Be sure to provide your child with a helmet when he or she starts riding a tricycle or bike. Explain that bike helmets must always be worn by everyone.
- Make sure your children only play with age appropriate playmates. Older children often play rough and don't always realize that they're jeopardizing the safety of much smaller children.
- Strap your children into their car seats or use seat belts, depending on the age of your child. Always double check your children's car seats or seatbelts on a regular basis to be sure they're functioning properly.

- Have a properly trained professional regularly check all of your car's airbags to be sure they're functioning properly. When an airbag fails to open properly or bursts open with far too much force, your child could sustain a very serious injury or even death.
- Make sure your small children only play on soft or padded surfaces. After checking to be sure your own floor surfaces are safely padded, don't feel timid about asking other parents about the floor surfaces in their homes.
- Don't ever drive drunk or even slightly inebriated. Your child deserves your very best driving. [Car accidents](#) frequently result in head injuries.
- Install window guards inside your home to prevent your children or their guests from falling out of a window.
- Purchase appropriate fire ladders if you live in a two-story or taller house. Safety ladders should be carefully stored in strategic locations around the house so that adults can pull them out once a fire erupts (and it's no longer possible to exit through one of the house doors). Always provide complete fire safety instructions to all caregivers who stay with your children. They'll need to know how to quickly help everyone escape from the house should a fire or other major disaster occur.
- Make sure you install safety gates at the head of your staircase and in other critical areas of your home to prevent injuries. Most hardware and home improvement stores can readily show you how to install these gates.
- Never let a young child sit alone in a bathtub or bassinette. Small children frequently have poor balance and need your constant presence while they're in water.
- Make sure each of your children (who are old enough) know how to dial 9-1-1 in case a serious injury occurs in their presence. This skill may not only help them personally, it could even one day and up saving your life or that of one of their siblings or playmates.
- Consider having a group like the ThinkFirst National Injury Foundation make a safety presentation to both the older children and adults in your community.
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