

Free from falls

“ *A preventable accident ends up with a shattered family. And that’s just very tragic.* ”

Paediatric Neurologist (a doctor who specialises in child brain injury)

Scrapes and bruises are a part of growing up. But even a fall from a highchair can cause a bad head injury. That’s because babies’ heads are much heavier than their bodies, which makes them top-heavy. And when they land, their head takes much of the impact.

It doesn’t make sense trying to stop all falls. But there are some serious ones you can easily stop once you know how and why.

 **Cots, beds and changing tables** – now I can wriggle and roll!

- Even small babies can wriggle off a bed or changing table – so change their nappies on the floor and avoid leaving them on a raised surface
- As soon as your baby can stand, remove any large toys they might climb on to get out of their cot, preventing serious falls.

 **Stairs** – I can shuffle and I’m off!

- Even before they’re mobile, babies are injured when the person carrying them falls. So keep a hand on the rail going up and down stairs
- As soon as your baby starts moving around, fit safety gates to stop them climbing or falling down the stairs.

 **Highchairs** – is that my drink?

- Children may try to get things that are out of their reach
- They may lean over the side and topple out or push themselves up and try to climb out
- Get into the habit of using the straps on the highchair every time you use it.

 **Windows** – what’s that I can see?

- Small children are curious and want to see what’s happening outside but have no real understanding of danger
- Keep low furniture away from windows, especially in children’s bedrooms
- If you can, fit restrictors or locks on your windows
- If you opt for a lock, keep the keys somewhere you can find them, in case there’s a fire and you need to get out.

 **Trampolines** – how high can I bounce?

- The biggest risk from trampolines is having two people with very different weights
- Let children take it in turns and avoid adults and children jumping together
- Use a safety net or cage so children can’t be thrown onto the ground.

