



# SAFETY TIPS FOR SECOND-HAND PRODUCTS AND HAND-ME-DOWNS

## *What is a Recall?*

*The first step in a recall is a report by a consumer, retailer or manufacturer of an unsafe or illegal product.*

*The report is usually made to a government agency like Health Canada or the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) in the United States.*

*A recall is issued and the product is taken off store shelves. The manufacturer then tries to alert people who have already bought it. Recall notices can be found in newspapers, magazines or on the internet.*

*It is impossible to find every person who has bought a recalled product. Not everyone returns or fixes the item even if they know about the recall. This is why so many unsafe products are still found in homes, garage sales and second-hand stores.*

*Every year in Canada and the U.S., thousands of children are hurt by recalled or unsafe baby products. Are you planning to buy, sell or give away a second-hand product? Before you do, follow these tips:*

## **Cribs**

### **Cribs made before September 1986 are not safe**

Here are the top five features to look for in a second-hand crib:

- *Slats should be no more than 6 cm (2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches) apart.*
- *The mattress should be bolted onto the frame, NOT suspended by 's-shaped' hooks.*
- *No more than one finger should fit between the mattress support and the sides of the crib .*
- *The mattress cannot be higher/thicker than 15 cm (6 inches).*
- *The crib should have no posts or decorative cut-outs that can trap a baby's head or snag clothing.*
- *It should be made after September 1986. Look for a date of manufacture on the crib frame .*



## **Portable Cribs and Playpens**

### **Do you own a recalled playpen or portable crib?**

Some older portable cribs and playpens have been recalled because they can collapse. When this happens, babies can suffocate between the folding rails. At least 14 babies have already died in one of these recalled products.

A second-hand, portable crib or playpen should have the following safety features:

- *A label showing the model number and date of manufacture. Check to make sure the model is not recalled.*
- *Fabric mesh sides with holes no bigger than 6 mm (1/4 inch) wide.*
- *A height of at least 50 cm (20 inches), measured from the top of the mattress to the top of the frame.*
- *A snug-fitting mattress no more than 2.5 cm (1 inch) high/thick. A high mattress can trap a baby in the soft sides of the crib or playpen.*

## Change Pads and Tables

### Prevent falls

Babies – even newborns – can easily wriggle or roll off change tables and counters. To prevent falls:

- Use a change pad with a built-in safety strap to hold your baby.
- Look for a change table with raised sides or rails.
- Always keep one hand on your baby during diaper changes.
- If you don't have a change table, change your baby on the floor or in the crib.

## Strollers

### Slip sliding away

If not buckled up, a baby can easily slip out of a stroller or stand up and tip it over. A folding stroller can collapse if not locked properly. Umbrella strollers will tip very easily if handles are overloaded with purses, shopping or diaper bags.

A safe stroller should have these features:

- A t-shaped or five-point harness.
- A safety latch that is working properly. The latch will stop the stroller from collapsing.
- Good brakes.
- A wide wheel base. The wider the bottom of the stroller, the harder it will be to tip over.
- A storage basket underneath the stroller, so you won't need to hang items from stroller handles.



## Baby Walkers

### Too young to drive!

A baby in a wheeled walker can travel at speeds of up to one metre (three feet) per second! Wheeled walkers are not babysitters. They increase the risk of:

- **BURNS** – Walkers make babies taller. Babies in walkers can grab things normally out of reach, such as appliance cords and hot drinks.
- **FALLS** – Babies trapped in walkers cannot brace themselves for falls down stairs or off ledges. They can suffer serious head injuries.
- **COLLISIONS** – An out-of-control baby in a walker is likely to run into furniture or people. An unstable piece of furniture could topple over and land on your baby.

Children who use walkers do not learn to walk any sooner than those who don't. If you want a product that can entertain your baby for short periods, look for an activity centre without wheels.

## High Chairs

### All buckled up

Safer high chairs have wide bases and t-shaped safety belts to prevent children from falling out. If your high chair has no safety straps then buy a safety harness. Because it is removable, a harness can go with you to restaurants and shopping malls to help secure your child in strollers, high chairs and shopping carts. Available at most safety stores for between \$10 and \$15, a safety harness is a wise investment.



## Car Seats

### Beware of used car seats

Car crashes are the leading cause of death among children in Canada. Seat belts are designed for a 165-pound man, and are not meant to be worn by children younger than nine years of age. Until your child is big enough to ride in an adult seat belt, he or

she will need to be buckled up in an approved infant, toddler or booster seat.

Car seats sold in Canada must meet Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (CMVSS). Did you know that more than 200 models of second-hand car seats are either recalled or need replacement parts due to safety flaws? Never use a second-hand car seat if:

- It is more than 10 years old, or older than the expiry date marked on the seat.
- It has been in a crash.
- You cannot find the model number, date of manufacture or CMVSS labels on the seat.
- The instruction booklet is missing (call the manufacturer for a free booklet).
- The harness straps are frayed or torn.
- There are any cracks or signs of strain in the plastic shell.
- The padded liner is torn or detached from the seat.
- The seat has been recalled due to safety reasons and has not yet been repaired.

If you plan to give away or sell your car seat to someone else, make sure it meets CMVSS standards and has not been recalled. You can find out if your car seat is recalled by visiting [www.bcaa.com/automo/safety.html](http://www.bcaa.com/automo/safety.html)

If you are expecting and haven't yet bought a seat, the safest car seats for newborns are branded 'infant-only'. These seats fit newborns better and also have handles to make transport to and from the car much easier.

*In 2001, there were 87 million units of products recalled by the CPSC in the United States. These products were identified to be either dangerous to the public or violate safety standards.*

## Drawstrings

### No strings attached

Some hand-me-downs and imported clothing have drawstrings. These include snowsuits, jackets, hooded sweatshirts, mittens and toques. A child can strangle on drawstrings that get caught in play equipment or furniture. To make clothing safe to wear, simply remove the drawstrings.

## Safety Gates

### Diamonds aren't a girl's best friend

Avoid second-hand safety gates with diamond-shaped openings or uneven edges. Some of these old-style expansion gates can cause severe pinching injuries, falls or suffocation. There are safer types of second-hand gates. Which one you choose depends on where you want to use it.

Before you look for a safety gate, ask yourself these questions:

- **Is it for the top of the stairs?** *For the top of the stairs, you will need a gate that bolts to the wall on both sides. A pressure-mounted gate might fall over if your child leans on it, causing a nasty fall down the stairs. A pressure-mounted gate is fine to use at the bottom of stairs or between rooms.*
- **Will it be placed in a high traffic area?** *If you go back and forth between rooms often, you need a gate that is easy to open and close. Or it could be you – not your baby – who gets hurt trying to climb over it!*
- **Does my baby like to climb?** *Gates range in height from 60 – 80 cm (24 – 32 inches). The taller the gate, the harder it will be for your baby to climb over it. As well, some plastic gates have designs that are easier to climb. The hardest gates to climb have vertical rails like the one pictured above right.*
- **How wide is the opening or doorway?** *Always measure the space between the two points where you want to install your gate. There's nothing more frustrating than coming home with a gate and finding out it isn't wide enough!*



You should remove a stair gate when your child reaches two years of age or when the top of the gate is at chin height.

## Toys

### Play it safe

Keep an eye out for these toy hazards:

- **VERY SMALL OR BROKEN PARTS.** *These include toy stuffing, button eyes, plastic pieces and stickers. Small toy pieces can get lodged in babies' throats or end up in noses and ears. Toys made for children under three years of age should have no removable parts small enough to fit inside a 35 mm film canister or toilet paper tube.*
- **BANNED TOYS.** *It is illegal to sell toys that do not meet Canadian safety standards. However, many families unknowingly sell banned toys at garage sales or pass them down to their children. Lawn darts are examples of dangerous and illegal toys that can still be found on flea market tables across Canada.*
- **LEAD.** *Imported or antique toys, furniture and jewelry may contain lead. Be very careful about giving these items to young children. If you want to know if a product contains lead, buy a home lead-testing kit for between \$10 and \$15.*



## The Hazardous Product Act

### Planning a garage sale?

Think twice about selling damaged or recalled children's products. You could be held liable for selling items that are illegal under Health Canada's Hazardous Product Act.

Here is a partial list of items governed by the Act:

- **SAFETY GATES** with diamond-shaped openings or jagged "V" openings at the top.
- **BABY WALKERS.**
- **CAR SEATS** that do not meet Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (CMVSS).
- **SLEEPWEAR** that does not meet flammability requirements.
- **CLOTHING WITH DRAWSTRINGS.**
- **CRIBS** made before September 1986.
- **PROTECTIVE SPORTS EQUIPMENT.** Hockey helmets and face protectors sold in Canada must meet safety standards set by CSA International (CSA-Z262.1-M90, R97).
- **PLAYPENS** that do not meet Canadian safety standards.
- **STROLLERS** made before 1985.
- **LEAD** in toys or jewelry.
- **OLD WINDOW COVERINGS.** Old venetian blinds have continuous loops that can strangle young children. Since 1989 in Canada, 14 children have died after becoming entangled in blind cords.

If you plan to sell or give away a product in the future, make sure you keep the original stickers, instructions and warranty information that came with it. Check that a product isn't recalled before you pass it on to someone else. You will not only profit from peace of mind, but from being able to promote your product as meeting safety standards.



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## Need More Help?

To find out if a product is recalled, visit the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's web site at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) or call Health Canada's Product Safety Bureau in Vancouver at [604.666.5003](tel:604.666.5003) (and if it's a long distance call, let them know. They will call you right back).

For help with finding a safe car seat, visit [www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com) or call Safe Start's *Safe Ride* program at [604.875.3273](tel:604.875.3273).

For unbiased opinions and ratings on all kinds of children's products visit [www.epinions.com](http://www.epinions.com) or Consumer Reports online at [www.consumerreports.org](http://www.consumerreports.org)



## Help get rid of unsafe baby products!

### Keep tags and stickers!

You may not like the look of tags and stickers on new products like car seats, strollers and playpens. But they contain important information like dates, makes and model numbers. Without them, second-hand users have no way of knowing when products are recalled or need replacement parts.

### Send in your warranty card!

Help companies find you if their products are recalled or need fixing. Fill in and mail back your warranty card as soon as you buy a new product.

### Keep the instructions!

The instruction booklet is usually the first thing that goes missing after you buy a product. But it is a very important part of keeping babies safe. Many injuries happen when parents or caregivers do not follow the manufacturer's instructions when assembling or using a product.

For baby-proofing tips, safety products and links to more information, visit Safe Start at [www.cw.bc.ca/safestart](http://www.cw.bc.ca/safestart) or call [604.875.2244](tel:604.875.2244), toll-free in B.C. [1-888-331-8100](tel:1-888-331-8100).



Safe Start is the injury prevention program of B.C.'s Children's Hospital and creator of Canada's first, hospital-based childproofing shop – featuring more than 200 home and outdoor safety products.

Safe Start is proudly sponsored by Overwaitea and Save-On-Foods.