

Falling Down!

Preventing falls

Falls are the most common type of household injury. They're particularly dangerous for young children and the elderly but anyone can be left with broken bones, cuts, bruises, or even permanently disabled or dead from a fall in or around the home.



Some potential dangers:

Windows and balconies - Open windows are particularly dangerous for young children, who have no sense of the danger of heights and can easily climb up and fall out. It's best to move furniture away from windows so there's nothing to climb onto or trip over. Be especially careful on balconies - even if the balcony rail looks sturdy, it could give way if you lean against it.

Chairs and stepladders - Check that these are steady before you climb up and that any locking devices are secured. Get someone to hold the base and make sure the ground beneath is even and non-slippery. Test it before you climb and don't over reach!

Outside the house - Keep off roofs and out of trees. Use climbing equipment carefully.

Bunk beds - Regularly check the guard rails and slats under the top bunk. Have a lamp handy so nobody climbs down from the top bunk in the dark. Avoid climbing down in socks - your foot could easily slip.

Footwear - Impractical, slippery or badly fitted footwear can also cause a fall. The shoes might look great but if they're difficult to walk in, forget them!

Case Study: Stairs

Stairs can be the most dangerous area of the house, for falls – especially if they're uncarpeted, worn or if the carpet is loose.

It's important to:

- always use the banister when going up or down – never carry something with both hands
- make sure the stairway is well lit
- make sure the stairs and areas near them are free from clutter and mess
- walk up and down carefully, especially if you're wearing slippers or shoes with poor grip
- be extra careful if the carpet is threadbare.

