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INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

Take steps to keep kids safe on escalators, elevators

During the busiest shopping days of the year, it's easy to forget that escalators and elevators found in malls and department stores can pose serious safety risks to children.

From cuts and scrapes to amputation, about 2,000 children under the age of 19 years are injured annually in escalator-related incidents, and more than half the injuries are falls, according to a 2006 study in *Pediatrics*, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

In addition, children younger than age 2 had the largest percentage of elevator-related injuries, according to a 2007 study published in *Clinical Pediatrics*.

Elevator-related injuries most commonly occur when children get their arms or legs caught in closing doors, while escalators can prove dangerous to children under age 5 and to those wearing soft-soled shoes or flip-flop sandals.

Fortunately, most elevator injuries are preventable. The study in *Clinical Pediatrics* found that among elevator-related injuries that required emergency department visits, nearly all were due to parental inattention or negligence. Only 5.4% resulted from elevator malfunction.

To keep kids safe, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and other safety experts recommend parents take the following precautions:

Escalators

- Never bring your child onto an escalator in a stroller or cart. Instead, take the elevator or carry your child.
- Remove loose drawstrings from children's mittens, scarves, shoes and other clothing to prevent them from getting caught in the escalator.
- Hold your child's hands and have him or her face forward when standing on the escalator.
- Do not allow children to play or sit on the steps and teach them to avoid the edges of steps, where entrapment can occur.
- Learn where escalators' emergency shutoff buttons are located.



Elevators

- Supervise your child in or near elevators, especially when exiting or entering the elevator.
- Set a good example for your child by not using an arm or leg to try to stop the elevator doors from closing.

— Allison Bond

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