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Report presents additional concerns about crib bumpers

by Melissa Jenco, News Content Editor

A new report details the dangers of padded crib bumpers and recommends new performance standards.

The findings echo the Academy's concerns and lend weight to the AAP recommendation of a ban on the products.

"The overwhelming evidence shows that they do nothing more than contribute to the deadly clutter in many of our nation's cribs," U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commissioner (CPSC) Elliot F. Kaye said in a statement.

The report, authored by Kaye's senior science and policy adviser Jonathan D. Midgett, Ph.D., follows up on a September 2016 CPSC staff report that analyzed 107 fatal and 282 nonfatal incidents from January 1990 through March 2016 that were associated with crib bumpers. Incidents included entrapment of head or limbs, choking and near suffocation.

Staff at the time determined CPSC action on crib bumpers likely couldn't have prevented many of the incidents. However, that conclusion was **met with criticism** from CPSC commissioners who called for the development of safety standards.

The **new report** revisits the staff's research and identifies six additional hazards associated with padded bumpers:

- They limit space on the mattress.
- They cover key failure points on the crib.
- They are difficult to install.
- They are used with children older than the recommended age.
- They are used outside cribs.
- Their use sends mixed messages about padded objects in a crib.

Rachel Y. Moon, M.D., FAAP, lead author of the Academy's safe sleep **policy statement**, agreed the padded bumpers pose real dangers.

"Given the fact that bumpers do very little to promote safety for our youngest infants, who are at highest risk for injury and death associated with bumpers, and because bumpers increase the risk for accidental suffocation and entrapment, bumpers should not be in the crib," she said.

The report acknowledged limb entrapments have occurred in cribs without bumpers but said "they are minor injuries and they overwhelmingly occur to children who are too old to be using bumpers anyway." Proponents of new safety measures also say slats are closer together in newer cribs, further lowering chances of entrapment.

To mitigate the risks associated with padded crib bumpers, the report suggests CPSC block the use of bumpers that can conform to an infant's face or restrict airflow.

"I think that it's great if the CPSC is considering developing performance standards for bumpers," Dr. Moon said. "However, this will likely take years. In the meantime, we continue to support a ban on the sale and use of bumpers."

Kaye said children should be sleeping on a crib mattress with only a tightly fitted sheet and no other padded objects, including pillows or stuffed animals, which is in line with the Academy's **2016 sleep policy**.



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"When it comes to any child's sleep environment, bare really is best," he said.

Resources

- [Consumer Product Safety Commission's Safe to Sleep Crib Information Center](#)
- [Safe to Sleep campaign](#)
- [Information for parents on the HealthyChildren website](#)