

Children's Toy Safety

Rattles/Squeeze Toys/Teethers

Because children have choked to death on baby rattles, the Commission issued a regulation in 1978 requiring:

- 1) that rattles be large enough to prevent them from becoming lodged in an infant's throat.
- 2) that they be sturdily constructed to prevent them from separating into small pieces that can be swallowed or inhaled.

To date, the largest rattle known to have lodged in an infant's mouth/throat had an end about the size of a golf ball. Squeeze toys and teethers have been involved in similar choking incidents. Rattles, squeeze toys and teethers involved in incidents had handles or ends small enough to enter a baby's mouth and lodge in the throat, blocking the airway.

Safety Tips

1. Check all rattles, squeeze toys and teethers for small ends that could extend into the back of the baby's mouth. If you feel that the toy may be too small for safety, throw it away.
2. Take rattles, squeeze toys, teethers, and other small objects out of the crib or playpen when the baby sleeps.
3. Teethers, like pacifiers, should never be fastened around a baby's neck.
4. Avoid rattles and squeeze toys with ball-shaped ends.

Toy Chests

CPSC has received reports of death and brain damage as a result of toy chest lids falling on children's heads or necks. These chests include those specifically manufactured for toy storage, as well as trunks, wicker chests, wooden storage chests, and other similar items.

Most of the children were under two years of age. Accidents occurred when children were reaching over and into the chest when the lid dropped, either falling on their heads or trapping them at the neck between the lid and the edge of the toy chest.

Another potentially fatal, but less frequent, hazard is suffocation, which has resulted in the deaths of several children. These accidents happened when children climbed into toy chests to hide or sleep. Because the toy chests were not adequately ventilated, the children suffocated in the enclosed space.

If You Are Buying a New Toy Chest

1. Look for one that has a support that will hold the hinged lid open in any position in which it is placed or buy one with a detached lid or doors.

2. Look for a toy chest with ventilation holes that will not be blocked if the chest is placed against the wall, or a chest which, when closed, has a gap between the lid and the sides of the chest. Many chests are ventilated by a space between the underside of the lid and sides or front of the box.

3. Make certain that the lid of the toy chest does not have a latch.

If you already own a toy chest or trunk with a freely falling lid, CPSC recommends that you REMOVE THE LID to avoid possible tragedy. Otherwise, you may wish to install a lid support device designed to hold the lid open in any position. Buy a spring-loaded lid support that will not require periodic adjustment.