



TRAMPOLINE SAFETY

The Issue

Trampolines are becoming increasingly popular as home recreation items. This raises health and safety concerns because they can cause serious injuries if they are not used properly.

Background

Trampolines range in size from the large outdoor variety to the small, personal exercise type. In 2000, trampoline gymnastics became an official Olympic event, which probably contributed to their recent increase in popularity.

Currently, there are neither Canadian regulations on the design and construction of trampolines, nor requirements for their advertisement, sale or importation. However, ASTM International (formerly the American Society for Testing and Materials) has developed a standard which addresses trampoline components, assembly and instructions, as well as warnings that are to be provided with the product.

The Montreal Children's Hospital has reported that, between January and July 2004, its emergency room treated 40 trampoline-related injuries. The hospital had issued a warning in 1997 about the dangers associated with trampoline use after a teenager died from head injuries. The Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario issued a warning to parents in 2003, noting that the hospital sees more than 50 patients a year for trampoline-related injuries.

A 1998 report released by the Canadian Hospital Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP) noted that the hospital network had collected data on 149 trampoline-related injuries in 1990 and almost four times as many, 557 injuries, in 1998. The vast majority of trampoline-related injuries occurred in the 5-14 year age range (78.9%).

Health Risks Related to Trampoline Use

Injuries from trampoline use range from sprained ankles and wrists to more serious injuries, such as skull fractures, broken backs and necks. Most of the injuries are caused by inappropriate or unsupervised use. According to the 1998 CHIRPP report, most trampoline-related injuries are the result of:

- Attempting tricks or flips
- Colliding with, or landing on, another person on the trampoline
- Being pushed off the trampoline by another person
- Landing hard or improperly while jumping on the trampoline
- Falling off the trampoline and landing on the ground or a hard object
- Coming into contact with the springs or frame
- Jumping off, instead of climbing off, the trampoline.



Minimizing Your Risk

Because there is the potential for serious harm, be sure to take the following precautions when using a trampoline.

- Ensure that there is adequate, mature supervision when the trampoline is being used. (The Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario recommends the use of four spotters.)*
- Make sure only one person uses the trampoline at a time.
- Trampoline use by children under six years of age is not recommended.
- Do not use a ladder with the trampoline because it allows unsupervised access to young children.
- Do not try somersaults on the trampoline because landing on your neck or head can cause paralysis. Somersaults are advanced skills that should only be performed in an appropriate facility under the guidance of a certified instructor.
- Never jump onto a trampoline from a higher place.
- Never use a trampoline as a springboard to other objects.
- Only use a trampoline that has shock-absorbing pads that completely cover the springs, hooks and frame. The safety padding should be securely attached to the trampoline and have a contrasting colour to the trampoline bed, so that the two areas can be

easily distinguished from each other.

- Set up the trampoline on level ground that is well away from structures, trees and other play areas. It is recommended that there be at least a two metre clearance around the sides of the trampoline and at least an eight metre clearance above the trampoline.
- Make sure that the ground under the trampoline is completely clear of objects or obstructions.
- A trampoline enclosure with safety netting may help prevent injuries from falls, but it should never be used to replace adequate supervision.
- Inspect the trampoline before using it. Make sure the springs are secure, that the bed has no holes or tears, that the padding is securely fastened, that there are no bends or kinks in the frame, and that the leg braces are securely locked.

and advising the public of potential dangers.

Need More Info?

To report a problem with a trampoline, contact your nearest Health Canada Product Safety Office at:

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hecs-sesc/cps/contact.htm>

Or call 1-866-662-0666 and ask for the telephone number of the Health Canada Product Safety Office nearest you.

For more on child safety, go to: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hecs-sesc/cps/publications/iycs/is_your_child_safe.htm

To visit the Web site of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario: http://www.cheo.on.ca/english/1071_03_jul_03.html

For additional articles go to the It's Your Health Web site at: www.healthcanada.ca/iyh
You can also call (613) 957-2991

Health Canada's Role

Although there are currently no Canadian regulations regarding trampolines, Health Canada is monitoring their use. If there is evidence of a safety-related problem with a specific make of trampoline, such as a flaw in design or construction, Health Canada will take appropriate action to ensure that the health and safety of Canadians is protected. This would include working with relevant manufacturers and the industry to correct the problem