

Wellness Articles

Attached are weekly health and wellness articles provided by Alberta Health Services. As a way to help all Albertans live a healthy life, we welcome and encourage weekly newspapers, community newsletters and other publications to reproduce this information free of charge. Credit to Alberta Health Services or the identified content provider would be appreciated.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

Proposed publication date: July 31, 2017
Content provided by: Alberta Health Services

Reduce the risk of falls from balconies and windows

Alberta Health Services (AHS) is reminding Albertans of the potential hazards that open windows and balcony doors can pose to children.

Every year, AHS Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responds to child injury calls related to falls from windows and balconies. Last year, 175 children across Alberta were brought to an emergency department due to window and balcony fall-related injuries, and 20 of them required hospitalization. In the first four months of this year, 23 children in Alberta were brought to an emergency department due to these injuries, one of whom was hospitalized.

To reduce your child's risk, always try to take these simple precautions, both in your own home and at any home you're visiting or vacationing at:

- Move furniture such as cribs, beds, stools and change tables away from windows to prevent access to them. Outside, remember that furniture and other items stored on balconies and decks can be used to climb, resulting in a fall over a railing. It's best to remove these if you have children at home.
- Beware of open windows. Remember, screens are designed to keep bugs out; they will not keep children in.
- Install window guards on all windows on the second floor and above. These act like gates in front of windows.
- Consider installing safety devices that limit the distance in which a window can open to a maximum of 10 cm (four inches).
- Ensure your balcony's vertical railings are not more than 10 cm (four inches) apart. This will eliminate access between the vertical bars of a balcony or deck.
- Keep drapery cords out of reach of children. Wrap excess cord around cleats, or tie-down devices placed high on the wall, to avoid a choking hazard. Removing corded window coverings is the best way to keep your children safe, especially in your child's bedroom and other rooms where they play.



Direct supervision of children is the most effective way to prevent falls and other childhood injuries. For more information on household safety for children and other important injury prevention topics, visit www.ahs.ca/injuryprevention.