

Safety Fact Sheet

Prams and Strollers



What are prams and strollers?

Prams and strollers are small manually propelled vehicles with three or four wheels designed for use in transporting infants and toddlers by parents and caregivers on foot.

Prams are made for infants and as such are designed to accommodate them as they lay in a horizontal position. Prams are sometimes collapsible and compared to strollers, they tend to be more sturdy and have larger wheels.

Strollers are designed for use in transporting babies and children, over the age of six months, in an upright or semi-upright seated position. They tend to be lighter and more often of a collapsible construction. Side-by-side and long front-back tandem strollers are also available for transporting more than one child by a single parent or carer.

How may children be injured when using prams and strollers?

Entrapment

- Children may become entrapped if the frame of a pram or stroller collapses as a result of not being locked properly or due to a fault in the locking mechanism.
- Children may get their small fingers and toes caught in gaps.
- If a child is left unrestrained and unsupervised in a stroller, he/she may slip down, getting caught in the front bar or footrest.

Falls

- If children are unrestrained and unsupervised, they may pull themselves up onto the edge of a pram and fall off; in a stroller, a child may stand on the seat and fall as he/she loses balance.
- If the wheels of a stroller are not locked and the child is left unsupervised, an active child may be able to push off a nearby surface, causing the stroller to tip over. The stroller may also tip over as a result of children rocking back and forth while standing on the seat of a stroller or pram.
- A child may fall out of a stroller or even a pram as it tips over due to heavy bags being hung on the handles or stored in the carry basket.
- Children may also fall out of a pram or stroller if the parent or carer steering the vehicle loses control. This is particularly common on stairs, over curbs or very rough surfaces.

How common are these injuries?

Prams and strollers have been associated with entrapment and falls injuries in young children. The injuries are usually a result of children falling out of the pram/stroller or the pram/stroller tipping backwards. In Victoria, between 1996 and 2006, 1448 infants suffered injuries from prams and strollers.¹ This equates to over 140 injuries in Victoria alone.

Is there a Law or an Australian Standard for prams and strollers?

The law, in Australia, states that all prams and strollers sold from 1 July 2008 must comply with the construction, performance and marking requirements of the Australian Standard (AS/NZS2088:2000). These standards relate to having red brakes, a strap tied to the pram or stroller that can be worn around the wrist of the operator and a number of warning labels/information requirements.

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The Children's Hospital at Westmead suggest that you purchase a pram or stroller that meets the Australian Standard. If you choose to purchase a pram or stroller that does not meet the Australian Standard, please keep in mind the safety reminders below:

Remember:

- The Children's Hospital at Westmead recommends that you purchase a *pram or stroller* that meets the Australian Standard (AS/NZS 2088:2000).
- Prams or strollers supplied after 1 July 2008 are fitted with a red activator for use with parking devices (brakes) and a wrist tether strap to avoid incidences of unattended children in prams or strollers rolling away from the operator and thereby sustaining an injury.
- When purchasing this item, ensure that it is stable, has solid and durable wheels with an effective locking system, a strong footrest, a five-point harness (straps over shoulders, hips and crotch), has no gaps that could trap small fingers or toes and is easy to manoeuvre. If it is a stroller, make sure that the adjustable recline position locks securely.
- If you are purchasing a second-hand pram or stroller, make sure that all components are in working order.
- If your child is under six months of age, do not place him/her in a stroller unless the backrest can be adjusted to an angle greater than 30 degrees to the seat.
- Before each use, make sure that all frame locks are in place and fabric fasteners are secured.
- When using the pram or stroller, always use the harness provided.
- Do not allow your child to stand in or lean out of a pram or stroller.
- Do not allow more than the intended number of children to be seated in the pram or stroller at any time.
- Do not allow older children to climb onto the footrest of a stroller or push down on the frame of a pram or stroller. The added weight may tip the pram or stroller over.
- Never leave your child unattended in a pram or stroller.
- Make sure to remove your child from the pram or stroller before making any adjustments, as small fingers and toes may get caught in gaps created whilst making these adjustments.
- Do not overload the carry baskets fitted to a pram or stroller. Also avoid hanging filled shopping bags on handles as this may cause the vehicle to tip over.
- Do not carry hot drinks, tea or coffee, in the cup holders provided near the handle. The hot beverage may spill on your child, causing burn injuries.
- Do not use prams as a substitute for bassinets or cradles to lay your baby to sleep, as he/she may slip down and get caught in the front bars.
- The Children's Hospital at Westmead recommends that you check for products that have been recalled (www.recalls.gov.au) prior to buying or borrowing an item for use with your child.

¹ Monash University Accident Research Centre Website (2008)