

# Safety Fact Sheet

## Swings

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### What is a Swing?

A swing is a piece of playground equipment with a seat that is generally attached to a frame using a length of rope/chain. Children sit down on the seat and by moving their legs forward and backward create a swinging motion that causes the seat to swing high. The swinging may also be assisted by another person pushing from behind.

### How may a child be injured?

#### Cuts and bruises

- Children may fall from a swing and sustain cuts and bruises.
- Children may also experience cuts and bruises if chain links, holding the swing to the frame, are not covered in plastic and crush a child's fingers.

#### Falls

- Children may lose balance on a swing, stand on a swing or hold onto a swing incorrectly which may lead to a fall.

#### Strangulation

- Children may get twisted in the rope/chain/wire attaching the swing to the frame and in extreme cases be strangled by this movement.

#### Struck by object

- Children may be hit or knocked over while walking in front of/or behind another child who is on the swing.

### How common are these injuries?

In Victoria between July 2002 and June 2004, 6,910 playground equipment fall injuries were recorded, 628 (9%) were associated with swings<sup>1</sup>. There are no recent published statistics available for NSW.

### Is there a Law or an Australian Standard for Swings?

It is recommended that manufacturers of swing sets follow the Australian Standard (AS 4685.1:2004, AS 4685.2:2004).

It is recommended that the installation of swing sets follow the Australian Standard (AS/NZ 4422:1996, AS/NZ 4486.1:1996).

This is a voluntary standard that manufacturers and installers are not required to meet, however The Children's Hospital at Westmead and Kaleidoscope suggest that you purchase a swing set that meets this standard. If you choose to purchase a swing set that does not meet the Australian Standard, please keep in mind the safety reminders below:

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### Remember:

- The Children's Hospital at Westmead and Kaleidoscope recommend that you purchase a swing set that meets the Australian Standards (AS 4685.1:2004, AS 4685.2:2004, AS/NZ 4422:1996, AS/NZ 4486.1:1996).
- When installing swings at home please remember :
  - To anchor the swing very well
  - to place a soft surface underneath the swing that extends 2.5m past the longest point of extension from the swing seat, in both the forward and backward direction. This soft surface should be 250mm deep
  - to leave a large, open space around the swings
- The Children's Hospital at Westmead and Kaleidoscope recommend that children are supervised at all times by a responsible adult when using swings.
- The Children's Hospital at Westmead and Kaleidoscope recommend that you check for products that have been recalled ([www.recalls.gov.au](http://www.recalls.gov.au)) prior to buying or borrowing an item for use with your child.

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<sup>1</sup> Clapperton, A. and Cassell, E., *Consumer product-related injury (1): Playground equipment and trampolines*, Hazard, Ed. No 61, 2005