

This fact sheet has been prepared by HomeSafeKids (a division of HomeSafe Group Pty. Ltd.) Its purpose is to highlight the everyday dangers that exist in Australian homes and the frightening effect home injuries can have on children and their families. Many of these injuries could have been prevented by eliminating dangers from homes and by greater supervision.

Data on the incidence of dangers in homes has been compiled from child home safety inspections undertaken in Victoria by HomesafeKids from 2006 to 2012 .

Data on the number of children treated in hospital for injuries was provided by the Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit (VISU) at the Monash Injury Research Institute (MIRI). These data cover Emergency Department presentations and hospital admissions of children aged under 15 years treated in Victorian Hospitals in 2009 (the latest available year of data). Deaths have not been included in these figures.

Injury data for Australia has been prepared from Victorian injury data then estimated on a pro rata population basis. In 2010, there were 4.23 million Australians under 15 and 1.02 million Victorians (24.1%).

Child Home Injury Facts

Child hospital – treated injury cases

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| Number of presentations and admission of children under 15 years of age at Victorian hospitals due to unintentional (accidental) injury in 2009. At least 43% of these injuries occurred in the home. | 80,909 |
| Estimated number of presentations and admissions in Australia in 2009 | 336,000 |
| Estimated number of children under 15 in Australia (June 2010). | 4,230,000 |
| Proportion of children treated in Victorian hospitals each year due to injury. | 8.0% |

Falls

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| Estimated number of children treated in Australian hospitals for fall injury in 2009. Some of the most serious falls in the home are caused by falls from height such as from stairs and furniture. | 147,500 |
| Proportion of inspected homes with stairs with balustrades that do not comply with current safety codes. | 33% |
| Proportion of inspected homes with stairs that do not comply with current safety codes. | 10% |

Cutting & Piercing Injuries

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| Estimated number of children treated in Australian hospitals for cutting/piercing injuries in 2009. Many cutting and piercing injuries are caused by unsafe low level glass in windows, doors and furniture and by children accessing knives, scissors, etc. in the kitchen. | 17,900 |
| Proportion of inspected homes with non safety glass. | 25% |
| Proportion of inspected homes with accessible kitchen hazards. | 100% |

Hit/Struck/Crush Injuries

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| Estimated number of children treated in Australian hospitals for hit/struck/crush injuries in 2009. There are many causes for these injuries but one that can cause permanent damage is toddlers' fingers being caught in the hinge sides of doors, particularly bedroom doors. It is estimated that 500 children per year present to hospital emergency departments in Victoria with finger jam injury and 30 of these children have one or more fingers amputated. Another potential cause of serious injury and death is furniture (including bookshelves and televisions/screen) tip overs. | 69,900 |
| Proportion of inspected homes with finger jam hazards. | 100% |
| Proportion of inspected homes with unstable furniture. | 50% |

| Transport | |
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| Estimated number of children treated in Australian hospitals for transport-related injuries in 2009. | 15,700 |
| The vast majority of injuries are caused by motor vehicle accidents, however on average one Australian child per month dies from being run over in their driveway, usually by a family member or friend. For every death there are several injuries. | |
| Proportion of inspected homes with a dangerous driveway configuration. | 33% |
| Proportion of inspected homes that have inadequate latching to external doors allowing unsupervised toddler access to garages, driveways and sheds. | 20% |

| Fire/Burns/Scalds | |
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| Estimated number of children treated in Australian hospitals for fire/burns/scalds in 2009. | 7,100 |
| Two causes of more severe burn/scald injuries are excessively hot tap water and domestic fires. | |
| Proportion of inspected homes with hot water temperature set at or above 55°C. (50°C is the current mandatory maximum for bathroom outlets by law.) | 60% |
| Proportion of inspected homes without fire extinguishers or fire blankets. | 60% |
| Proportion of inspected homes with inadequate or non functioning smoke alarms. | 33% |

| Poisonings | |
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| Estimated number of children treated in Australian hospitals for poisoning in 2009. | 4,200 |
| Common causes of toddler poisoning are the ingestion of paracetamol, sleeping tablets, cold and flu medications and oral contraceptive pills. Toxic plants and ingesting animal faeces can also result in poisoning, but may not be specifically diagnosed. | |
| Proportion of inspected homes with improper storage of medications and household chemicals. | 50% |
| Proportion of inspected homes with toxic plants listed on the toxic plants species list. | 40% |

| Dog bite injury | |
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| Estimated number of children treated in Australian hospitals for dog bite injury in 2009. | 2500 |
| Children aged 0-4 years are most at risk of dog bite. They are more likely to be bitten by the family pet or a pet they know than by a strange dog. Because of the size of the children they are often bitten on the face. The family pet should have its own sleeping and feeding area that is not able to be accessed by young children. | |
| Proportion of homes with inadequate dog-child separation. | 15% |

| Choking/Suffocation/Strangulation | |
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| Estimated number of children treated in Australian hospitals for choking/suffocation/strangulation in 2009. | 840 |
| Choking/ suffocation/strangulation that interferes with breathing most commonly occurs when toddlers swallow food or small objects such as coins or small toys or toy parts, however a number of deaths (1-2 each year in Australia) and severe injuries have been caused by toddlers being strangled by looped blind/curtain cords. | |
| Proportion of homes built prior to 2010 (when new safety regulations were enacted) which have blinds and/or window coverings with looped cords. | 90% |

| Non-fatal Drowning | |
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| Estimated number of children treated in Australian hospitals for non-fatal drowning in 2009. | 220 |
| Deaths from drowning have dropped since compulsory pool fencing regulations were enacted throughout Australia. However, for every death there are several non-fatal drownings, a substantial proportion of which result in permanent brain injury. Drowning can occur in inground and aboveground backyard pools, water features, ponds, water storage receptacle. | |
| Proportion of inspected homes with hazardous swimming pools, ponds, water features, etc. | 18% |

Data sources: HomesafeKids home safety inspections and VISU E-Bulletin *Unintentional (accidental) hospital-treated injury in Victoria 2009* plus supplementary data provided on request.

To book a HomesafeKids child home safety inspection; email info@homesafekids.com.au or phone 1300 88 7233

