



Be On The Look Out!

Utica National Insurance Loss Control Department – Staff Alert

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Subject: Day Care Exposures - Safe Sleeping Practices

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

1.) CPSC Warns Against Placing Babies in Adult Beds: Refer to CPSC Document #5091

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA) have launched a national safety campaign aimed at reducing deaths associated with placing babies in adult beds. CPSC data shows that from 1999 through 2001 at least 180 children under the age of two died after being placed in adult beds.

The national safety campaign encourages safe sleeping practices for babies. The campaign will be targeted to reach new and expectant parents, day care providers, hospitals and health departments.

According to the CPSC, "Many parents (and day care providers) may be unaware of the hidden dangers associated with placing babies in adult beds. Simply pushing an adult bed against a wall or lining the edges of a bed with pillows won't protect babies." These practices place infants in danger of suffocation and entrapment.

The CPSC data shows that babies placed in adult beds are at risk of dying from several hidden hazards including:

- Entrapment between the bed and wall, or between the bed and another object.
- Entrapment involving headboards, footboards or bed frames.
- Soft bedding-related hazards (such as suffocation on a pillow).
- Falls (sometimes into a pile of clothing or plastic, resulting in suffocation).
- Overlaying of the baby by another child or adult in the bed.

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The CPSC recommends the following safety tips to ensure that babies under 24 months sleep safely:

- Don't place a baby to sleep in an adult bed.
 - * **Hidden hazard:** The baby could become entrapped between the bed & wall, or in headboards, footboards, bedframes. Babies could also fall or suffocate in soft bedding.
- Place babies to sleep on their backs in a crib that meets current safety standards and has a firm, tight-fitting mattress. If you use a portable crib or playpen, make sure it meets current safety standards. Use only the mattress or pad provided by the manufacturer.
- Babies should be placed to sleep on their backs, not their stomachs.
 - * **Hidden hazard:** According to the Back to Sleep Campaign, "Babies sleeping on their stomachs seem to be more likely to succumb to SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)."
- Don't place a baby to sleep on soft bedding.
 - * **Hidden Hazard:** The baby could suffocate. Do not use soft bedding such as pillows and thick quilts and comforters for infants under 12 months old.

2.) CPSC Warns About Infant Strangulations Caused by Failure of Crib Hardware: Refer to CPSC Document #5025

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is concerned about possible accidental death or injury to young children in cribs that are in need of repair. The CPSC has investigated or received reports of numerous incidents in which cribs have come apart. Many of these resulted in death. One example includes a death due to entrapment and strangulation when screws securing the side rail of a crib came loose from the corner post of the crib creating a space between the rail and mattress. There are many other similar incidents that have resulted in suffocation when components of a crib came apart and the child was trapped between the mattress and a side rail.

Accidents such as these may occur when hardware intended to hold parts of the crib together has worked loose, come apart, or broken. Hardware can become worn or overstressed as a result of children's playing; repeated disassembling and reassembling of cribs, such as during household moves; when new babies are born in the family; and when cribs are sold or given to another family.

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Hardware also can work loose as a result of moving or cleaning the crib. On some cribs, the design is such that the mattress support hanger may easily come out of the supporting hook, allowing the mattress to drop at one corner. This can happen when changing the sheets, raising or lowering the drop side, or simply when the baby moves in the crib. The CPSC also knows of cases in which wood screws have pulled out of the wood, machine screws and nuts have worked loose, and hooks which support the mattress have broken or bent.

The CPSC has begun to work with crib manufacturers to examine the need for product standards for crib hardware and to determine the extent to which such standards would prevent injuries and deaths. If you have a crib, you are urged to inspect it frequently for hardware which has disengaged or needs to be repaired or replaced. The Commission also suggests:

- When buying a new crib, physically examine it for stability. Look for adequate strength in the frame and headboard, a secure fitting mattress support structure, and a label certifying that the crib complies with the Commission's standards for cribs.
- If you buy a used crib, make sure all the hardware is present and in good condition. Make sure that when the crib is assembled, all the pieces of the crib are securely attached and the mattress fits snugly. Also, check the wood joints to be sure they are not coming apart. Check to see that the slats are no more than 2-3/8" apart -- the distance required by law for all new cribs.
- On cribs in which the mattress support hanger easily disengages from the hooks on corner posts, secure the mattress support hanger firmly to the hook on the post.
- If you have doubts about the condition of your crib, have the crib repaired or discard it.

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
Web site: www.cpsc.gov
1-800-638-2772

American Academy of Pediatrics
Web site: www.aap.org

National Institute of Child Health and
Human Development
"Back to Sleep" Campaign
1-800-505-CRIB

For additional safety information on safe sleeping practices for babies, contact the CPSC at (800) 638-2772 or write to CPSC, Washington, DC 20207 or visit our web site at www.cpsc.gov.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission protects the public from unreasonable risks of injury or death from 15,000 types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction.

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