

This Just In...

Pushing Things Too Far: Shopping Carts Unsafe for Carrying Children?

It is more common for children to be hurt in shopping carts than most people think, and these injuries can be severe or even deadly. More than 24,000 U.S. children were treated in hospital emergency rooms for shopping cart injuries in 2005. For this reason, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is now recommending against placing children in shopping carts.

The AAP reports that most of the injuries occurred when a child fell out of the shopping cart, the cart tipped over, the child became entrapped in the cart, or the child fell while riding on the outside of the cart. Some shopping cart designs are unstable, and it can be very difficult for a parent to tell whether it's safe for a child to ride in just by looking, according to the report.

Instead of putting a child in a shopping cart, the AAP recommends the following alternatives:

- Bring another adult along to watch the children while shopping.
- Put children in strollers, wagons, or front infant carriers instead.
- Ask older children to walk and praise them for behaving and staying nearby.
- Leave children at home with another adult.
- Shop online if local stores offer shopping on the Internet.
- Shop at stores that offer carts that allow children to ride closer to the ground, such as those that look like race cars and trucks. If they don't carry these, ask them to do so.

For parents who choose to place their child in a shopping cart, parents should always avoid:

- Leaving a child alone in a shopping cart
- Allowing a child to stand up in a shopping cart
- Placing an infant carrier on top of a shopping cart
- Allowing a child to ride in the basket
- Allowing a child to ride on the outside of the cart
- Allowing an older child to climb on the cart or push the cart with another child inside

The AAP is also recommending that current U.S. standards for shopping cart safety be revised to include "clear and effective performance criteria" for child-restraint systems and cart stability to prevent falls and injuries due to cart tip-overs.



Uneasy Riders—Kids in shopping carts are often accidents waiting to happen.

Air Pollution Linked to Increased Infant Deaths

Infants exposed to outdoor air pollution are at a greater risk for dying from either a respiratory-related disease or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), according to a new study published in the August 2006 issue of *Pediatrics*.

The research looked at infant death certificates in Southern California during the years 1989–2000 and found that infants there breathed higher levels of carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, and particulate matter. Researchers found a link between high levels of these substances in infants who died from air pollution-related causes, and high nitrogen dioxide levels in SIDS victims.

New Evidence Links Music Lyrics and Teen Sexual Behavior

A new study published in the August 2006 issue of *Pediatrics* found that lyrics that degrade people sexually are linked to a higher likelihood to initiate and progress in sexual activity. But lyrics with sexual content that didn't degrade people didn't have nearly the same effect on teens, according to the study's findings.

Researchers interviewed youths between ages 12 and 17 to determine their level of sexual activity and their preferences for certain recording artists and music genres. They followed up with the teens one year later and again three years later.

Negative Family Comments About Child's Weight, Shape Have Lasting Effect

Even a few critical comments about a child's or adolescent's weight or shape can have a lasting impact in terms of low self-esteem and eating disorders, according to new research published in the August 2006 issue of *Pediatrics*.

In an Internet-based eating-disorder prevention program, more than 80 percent of 455 college-age women reported remembering even a few negative comments from parents or siblings. As one participant remarked, "People in my family called me things like 'stupid,' 'lazy,' or 'ugly.'"

Researchers recommend that pediatricians talk with parents about the impact of negative comments about a child's weight, shape, and eating habits, and teach parents how to provide positive, constructive advice.

Keep the School Year Safe

Pediatricians are reminding parents that school safety planning should continue during the school year.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has a few tips for making school a safe time for kids:

- Find another child your youngster can walk and ride the bus with.
- Review bus safety rules with your child:
 - Wait for the bus to stop before approaching the curb.
 - Do not move around while on the bus.
 - Check for oncoming traffic before crossing the street.
 - Never stoop in front of a bus to pick something up or tie shoelaces—the driver may not see you and assume it's OK to start moving on.
- If your child rides a bike to school, review basic safety rules for riding with your child, including the school's own rules.
- If bullies are a problem, help your child prepare a strategy for dealing with them. Tell your child:
 - It's always best to tell the bully to stop and walk away.
 - Don't cry or get upset; it only encourages bullies to keep it up.
 - If all else fails, parents should talk with the teacher about the problem.
- Be sure your child knows where to go after school and how to get there.
- If your child is at home alone after school, be sure the rules are clear with your youngster. He or she should know whom to contact in case of emergency and who is responsible for him or her.
- Help children avoid overloading their backpacks. Pack heaviest things closest to the back, and never pack heavier than 10 to 20 percent of the child's body weight. Teach your child to pick the backpack up with knees bent, using the legs to lift.

A little information and preparation can help kids to have happy and healthy days at school.

