



## Nearly 10,000 infants hurt each year in crib accidents

By **Liz Szabo**, USA TODAY

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More than 9,500 babies and toddlers go to the emergency room each year because of injuries related to cribs, playpens and bassinets, according to a 19-year study released today.



Consumer Product Safety Commission, via AP

More than 10 million drop-side cribs were recalled in recent years. In December, the Consumer Product Safety Commission banned them.

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An average of 113 children die each year from these accidents, according to the study, published in *Pediatrics*.

The true number of crib-related injuries and deaths is probably much higher, because the study included only children treated in ERs and not those seen at doctor's offices or urgent-care centers, says author Gary Smith, director of the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital in **Columbus, Ohio**.

About 94% of children injured in cribs were treated in the ER and released; 4% were hurt seriously enough to be admitted to the hospital, the study says. About 1.2% of children died.

Two out of three injuries were caused by falls, the study says.

Because their heads are large, "kids are top-heavy" and easily tip out of beds, Smith says. "They don't have the ability to break their fall with their arms, so they always fall head first."

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That suggests that manufacturers need to redesign cribs to prevent falls, says Angela Mickalide, research and program director of Safe Kids Worldwide.

She describes the new study as "a monumental contribution to the field of child injury prevention."

The **Consumer Product Safety Commission** in December created the first new mandatory crib standards in 30 years, prompted by the deaths of at least 36 infants since 2007. The

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new standards ban cribs with movable drop-down sides. Although drop-side cribs make it easier to get babies in and out, they also can trap children, especially when the cribs have broken pieces or missing hardware.

Manufacturers have recalled more than 11 million cribs since 2007, the commission says.

*Pediatrics* released the study a few days early, to coincide with a subcommittee hearing today in the House of Representatives. Lawmakers will review the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, which imposed stricter standards for children's products.

Consumer advocates have praised that law, which was passed after the "year of the recall," when millions of children's products were recalled because of high lead levels or dangerous parts. The law gave the commission more money and staff to ensure product safety and banned lead in children's toys, among other measures. Others, such as makers of handmade toys, have said the new law creates an unfair burden on them.

The commission also plans to issue new safety standards for toddler beds and bassinets this year, and to consider new standards for play yards, chairwoman [Inez Tenenbaum](#) said in a statement.

**Greg Mortenson**



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