

Shopping Cart Safety

AAP Parent Pages provide parents relevant facts that explain current policies and guidelines pertaining to children's health. This information is based on the American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement (www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2006-1215) and the Technical Report (www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2006-1216), both entitled "Shopping Cart-Related Injuries to Children," published in the August 2006 issue of *Pediatrics*.



It is more common than most people think for children to be hurt in shopping carts. These injuries can be severe or even deadly. Each year approximately 23 000 children are treated in hospital emergency departments for injuries from shopping carts. Most injuries are caused by falls from the cart or by the cart tipping over. Many injuries are to the head and neck.

Shopping carts come in different designs, and some may not be as stable or safe as they look. Before you put your child in a shopping cart, you should think twice about his or her safety. The American Academy of Pediatrics offers the following suggestions to increase your child's safety while you shop.

THINK ABOUT SAFER IDEAS FOR CHILDREN WHILE YOU SHOP

Instead of putting your child in a cart while you shop, try one of these safer ideas:

- Get another adult to come with you to watch your child while you shop.
- Put your child in a stroller, wagon, or frontpack instead of in a shopping cart.
- Ask your older child to walk and praise him or her for behaving and staying near you.
- Leave your child at home with another adult while you shop.
- Shop online if your store offers shopping on the Internet.

FOLLOW SAFETY RULES IF YOU DECIDE TO PUT YOUR CHILD IN A SHOPPING CART

If you decide to put your child in a shopping cart anyway, then follow these rules:

- Place your child in a safety belt or harness at all times when in a shopping cart.
- Never leave your child alone in a shopping cart.
- Do not let your child stand up in a shopping cart.
- Do not place an infant carrier on top of the shopping cart.
- Do not put your child in the basket.
- Never allow your child to ride on the outside of a cart.
- Do not allow an older child to climb on the cart or push the cart with another child in it, because it is very easy for a child to tip the cart over.

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SHOP AT STORES THAT CARE ABOUT SHOPPING CART SAFETY

Some stores have taken steps to keep children safe. Try to shop at stores that do the following:

- use carts with safer designs that allow children to ride closer to the ground (for example, in a small model car in front of the cart);
- ensure that all carts have a child restraint in each seating location;
- offer a pick-up area or help you bring your purchases to your car so you can safely take your child through the parking lot without having to use the cart; and/or
- have a supervised in-store play area for children.

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