

# A Safety Slip: Don't Hold a Child in Your Lap on Playground Slides

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A new study published this week in the *Journal of Pediatric Orthopaedics* found a relationship between young children going down a slide on the lap of an adult and tibia fractures. The study, conducted at Winthrop University Hospital, reviewed children with tibia fractures over an eleven month period and found 13.8% of the tibia fractures were sustained while sliding down a slide on an adult's lap.

"The correlation between a young child sliding down a slide while in an adult's lap has not previously been related to fractures of the tibia," stated study author John T. Gaffney, DO, an [orthopaedic surgeon](#) specializing in [pediatrics](#) in New York. "Many [parents](#) think it is actually safer to hold their toddler while going down a playground slide, but this study may prove otherwise," he added.

Typically, injuries sustained in Dr. Gaffney's study happened:

- when a young child was in an adult's lap while sliding and placed their leg in a position where it became fixed, while both the adult and child continued moving down the slide;
- or in other cases, the child's leg became twisted, creating a torque that led to a fracture in the lower extremity.

All tibia fractures associated with playing on a slide were sustained while going down the slide on the lap of an adult or older sibling. The age range of patients who sustained a tibia fracture while going down a slide was 14 months to 32 months.

Joan Mescall's son Gavin was part of Dr. Gaffney's study. Gavin was 14 months at the time of his tibia fracture, just one year ago. "You think you are doing the right thing, and then you realize you contributed to this accident," said Mescall. "Once a week I see a parent doing this at the park and I try to warn them," she added.

"Parents of the patient's in this study, just like Joan, were dismayed and frustrated at the lack of public awareness that such a common practice could cause, not prevent, an injury," said Gaffney. "Although going down the slide with a child on your lap may seem like an enjoyable moment for both, it can be putting them in danger," he stated.

"As a pediatric orthopaedic surgeon I want to prevent injuries, not just treat them, and if we can prevent just one toddler from sustaining a leg fracture, we are doing our job," added Gaffney.

Source: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons ([news](#) : [web](#))

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