

Trampolines should be banned except for gymnastics, says injury prevention expert

July 20 2018, by Lesley Young



Injuries on trampolines send hundreds of kids to emergency rooms in Alberta every year with serious injuries including fractures and concussions, says a U of A injury prevention expert. Credit: University of Alberta

Based on the high rates of injury on trampolines in Alberta every summer, the University of Alberta's Injury Prevention Centre would like to see the devices banned except for gymnastic training.

"Trampolines are marketed to parents as a good way for their kids to be outside and get physical activity. But unless there is an appropriate level of supervision, and kids know how to use them safely, they are a recipe for disaster," said Kathy Belton, the centre's associate director.

According to a review the centre conducted of [injury](#) statistics in Alberta from 2011 to 2014, there were 2,276 [trampoline](#)-related emergency department visits.

Overall, children between five and nine years old had the highest risk of a trampoline-related emergency department visit (36.7 per cent), followed by children aged 10 to 14 (26.6 per cent) and children between one and four years of age (22 per cent).

"The injuries—most often fractures and concussions—are very serious, with potentially long-lasting health consequences throughout children's lives," said Belton, adding that Alberta schools banned trampolines and ruled them as an unsafe way to get [physical activity](#) more than 15 years ago.

"That should tell parents something."

As well, Health Canada discourages recreational use of trampolines in kids under the age of six, and the Canadian Paediatric Society and Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine have long stated trampolines should not be used by [children](#) or adolescents for recreational purposes.

Safety tips

- For families determined to use their backyard trampolines this summer, Belton encouraged adopting these preventive measures:
- Ensure there is parental supervision at all times, with as many as

four spotters.

- Make sure only one child is jumping at a time.
- Examine older trampolines and upgrade protective padding as needed.
- Don't try somersaults; they are an advanced skill that could result in serious head and neck injuries.
- Only use a trampoline with shock-absorbing pads that completely cover the springs, hooks and frame, are securely attached and feature a contrasting colour so kids can see the difference.

Provided by University of Alberta

Citation: Trampolines should be banned except for gymnastics, says injury prevention expert (2018, July 20) retrieved 9 January 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-07-trampolines-gymnastics-injury-expert.html>

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