

Crutches, Walkers & Wheelchairs



Children and teens with an injury or disability may need to use mobility aids, such as crutches, walkers and wheelchairs, to help them get around more easily. Unfortunately, the use of mobility aids can result in injury in some cases. By knowing the risks and taking steps to prevent injuries, parents and caregivers can help keep their child safe while they are using crutches, walkers and wheelchairs.

Injury Facts

- Injuries are more common when using wheelchairs than walkers or crutches.
- Wheelchair-related injuries are more likely to be traumatic brain injuries and need hospitalization than injuries related to other mobility aids.
- Injuries on stairs or wet ground are common when using crutches.
- Tips and falls are most common.
- Children ages 2-10 years are more likely to:
 - Be injured while using wheelchairs
 - Have head and traumatic brain injuries
- Children ages 11-19 years are more likely to:
 - Be injured while using crutches
 - Have injuries to the legs and feet
 - Have sprains and strains

Safety Tips

- Keep mobility aids in good repair.
- Before using a mobility aid, the parent and the child should be trained by a professional on how to safely use the device.
- Practice using the aid, and follow all safety guidelines provided with the device. If possible, practice on stairs, ramps and curbs, as well as on flat surfaces before going home with the device.
- Wet and icy surfaces can be dangerous, especially when using crutches. Whenever possible, avoid traveling in wet, icy weather.
- Use ramps or elevators to go up or down a level and curb ramps to cross streets.
- Reduce the number of stairs and other barriers your child will have to come across while using the mobility aid.
- Common rooms, bedrooms or sleeping arrangements should be on the first floor of your home whenever possible.
- Remove throw carpets, electrical cords and anything else that may cause your child to trip.