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Play safe and minimize injuries on the playground

Orthopaedic surgeons offer safety tips to help keep kids safe on the playground

ROSEMONT, Ill. (August 15, 2018)—Playgrounds are a fun place for kids to let loose and get their daily dose of exercise. Exercise is essential to a child's development as it helps them maintain a healthy body weight and build strong bones and muscles. However, if playground equipment is not properly used and maintained, injuries can occur.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), in 2016, emergency departments, doctors' offices and clinics treated:

- 62,114 people for playground-related injuries;
- 8,566 for seesaw-related injuries;
- 112,036 for swing and swing set-related injuries; and
- 107,375 for slide-related injuries.

The [American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons \(AAOS\)](#) and the [Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America \(POSNA\)](#) encourage parents and guardians to educate kids about their risks of injuries on the playground and encourage them to play safely.

EXPERT ADVICE

"Many injuries happen when you least expect it," said AAOS spokesperson and pediatric orthopaedic surgeon John Gaffney, DO. "Parents and guardians should closely monitor children during play and talk to them ahead of time about the importance of proper playground equipment use."

The AAOS and POSNA recommend the following playground safety tips for parents:

- Never go down a slide with a baby or toddler in your lap.
- Steer children to age-appropriate playground equipment.
- Check to see that there is enough space for children to easily get off the slide or merry-go-round. Don't let kids crowd around the exit areas.
- Check the handgrips on monkey bars and other climbing devices to verify they are secure, and also shaped and sized for a child's hand.
- Swing seats should be made of plastic or rubber for a better grip.
- Avoid any equipment that has openings that could entrap a child's head.
- Be sure you can always clearly see your children on the playground.
- Avoid playgrounds that have concrete, asphalt, hard-packed dirt or grass play surfaces. The surface should be made of wood chips, mulch, or shredded rubber for play equipment up to seven feet high.
- Use care and caution in the sun. In hot weather, equipment exposed to direct sunlight can become hot, and potentially burn skin.

- Remove tripping hazards such as exposed concrete footings, tree stumps, or rocks.

For children:

- Play on dry equipment.
- Hold on to handrails and climb stairs or steps slowly.
- Slide one person at a time, sitting down and facing forward, and move away from the slide as soon as you reach the ground. Never climb up the front of the slide.
- No not cross in front of moving swings or teeter-totters.
- Remove drawstrings and hoods from clothing that could catch on equipment.
- Wear proper footwear to prevent splinters and cuts.

More Information about the AAOS

With more than 38,000 members, the [American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons](#) is the world's largest medical association of musculoskeletal specialists. The AAOS provides educational programs for orthopaedic surgeons and allied health professionals, champions and advances the highest quality musculoskeletal care for patients, and is the authoritative source of information on bone and joint conditions, treatments and related issues.

For more playground safety tips visit, OrthoInfo.org.