

# FACTS ON... *Inflatable Bounce Houses (Bouncy Castles)*

*A guide  
for those who  
work with  
professionals*



Inflatable Bounce Houses, or “bouncy castles,” are an increasingly popular children’s attraction at parks, fairs, fundraisers and birthday parties across the Maritimes. While they vary in size, height and features (i.e. mazes, slides), they all encourage multiple children to jump together in a semi-enclosed space.

Over the past 20 years, there has been a 6 fold increase of bounce house-related injuries. The injury rate has been growing each year as home versions of bouncy castles are becoming more prevalent. Most injuries occur from children colliding with each other while jumping, similar to a trampoline. Some of these injuries can be quite serious.

## *Injury Facts*

- Collisions between children of different ages and sizes are one of the leading causes of injuries when using this equipment.
- Young children are more likely to suffer bone injuries (fractures), while older children are more likely to suffer soft tissue injuries (sprains and strains) from bounce houses.
- Upper extremity fractures are the most common injury for children ages 0-18 years in bounce houses.
- Over 30 % of the bounce house-related injuries reported by CHIRPP (see below) between 1990-2010 required medical follow-up after initial treatment in the Emergency Department.

## *CHIRPP Statistics*

The Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP) is an injury data collection program.

The following statistics reflect a comprehensive study of National CHIRPP data collected from 2004-2009.

The statistics clearly show how children’s injuries related to bounce houses are experiencing an increase every year.

Year	Number of bounce house-related injuries
2004	37
2005	45
2006	65
2007	80
2008	105
2009	150



For more information on children’s injury prevention topics, visit [www.childsafetylink.ca](http://www.childsafetylink.ca) or call 1-866-288-1388 (toll-free in the Maritimes)



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### Types of bounce house-related injuries (from national CHIRPP data)

Fractures	34%
Sprains	19%
Bruises	20%
Other	27%

**Child Safety Link would like to share the following safety tips for bounce house use that will help your children enjoy this equipment as safely as possible:**

- Children should take off shoes, jewelry and remove all sharp/hard objects from their pockets before entering the bounce house.
- Children should always be supervised by a responsible adult while jumping in the bounce house.
- The safest way to use a bounce house is to have only one child on it at a time.
- If more than one child is in the bounce house, grouping children together of similar age and size can help reduce the risk of injuries.
- Discourage children from attempting stunts such as somersaults and flips.
- Remind children to stay away from the entrance and exit and the sides or walls of the bounce house while using it.
- If the bounce house begins to lose air, stop play and carefully exit it.
- Bounce houses should not be used outside when there are high winds, even if they are staked to the ground. There have been cases of bounce houses being tumbled across fields or lifted into the air by strong wind gusts, causing injuries to the children inside.



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