

Infant bath seat survey: Results and next steps

The Canadian Paediatric Surveillance Program (CPSP) sent a one-time survey on injuries, near-miss drownings and drownings linked to the use of infant bath seats and bath rings to all CPSP participants to obtain further data on the frequency and extent of this problem in Canada. The survey, commissioned by the Consumer Product Safety Bureau at Health Canada, was designed to complement previous reports of incidents linked to these products. The results stated in this summary represent one of a number of data sources that has been collected concerning incidents involving the use of infant bath seats and bath rings.

The CPSP survey results indicated that 25 of 1087 respondents recalled caring for one or more infants in the past two years who had experienced injuries (n=20), near-miss drownings (n=12) or drownings (n=2) related to the use of an infant bath seat or bath ring. In the months ahead, Health Canada will review appropriate actions and consider the public health implications of the survey findings. In addition, an advisory and a public education bulletin will be issued and posted on the Consumer Product Safety Web site at <www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hecs-sesc/cps/>.

LEARNING POINTS

- The Consumer Product Safety Bureau of Health Canada has received reports of nine injuries, 19 near-miss drownings and 11 drowning deaths linked to the use of infant bath seats and bath rings since 1983.
- In 2004 alone, three deaths linked to the use of infant bath seats occurred in Canada.
- In the United States, the Consumer Product Safety Commission has received reports of 163 injuries or near-miss drownings and 106 deaths due to the use of these infant bath seats and bath rings during the period from January 1983 through October 2003.
- Typically, drownings linked to bath seats and bath rings occur as a result of the infant bath seat becoming unstable and tipping over in the bath, the infant climbing out of the infant bath seat, or the infant slipping through the leg opening and become lodged under water.
- Despite clear warning labels stating “Prevent drowning. Never leave child unattended” on the older bath seat models and “Prevent drowning. Always keep baby within arm’s reach” on the newer models, in the majority of incidents, the infant was left unattended or under the supervision of a sibling.
- Paediatricians should stress the importance of constant adult supervision during infant bath time.
- Paediatricians should discourage the purchase and use of any infant bath seat or bath ring product.

The Canadian Paediatric Surveillance Program (CPSP) is a joint project of the Canadian Paediatric Society and Health Canada’s Centre for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control that undertakes the surveillance of rare diseases and conditions in children. For more information visit our Web site at <www.cps.ca/english/cpsp> or <www.cps.ca/francais/pcsps>.