



Fighting for Product Safety

High Chair Safety: Injuries and Recalls

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Introduction

ASTM F404-18 (voluntary standard) defines a “high chair” as “a free-standing chair for a child up to 3 years of age which has a seating surface more than 15 in. above the floor and elevates the child normally for the purposes of feeding or eating.” The ASTM standard further specifies that a high chair may be sold with or without a tray, have adjustable heights, and recline for infants. While some manufacturers could choose to comply with the voluntary standard, this is not a U.S. mandatory safety standard.

In this report, KID will review high chair recalls, hazards, and injuries for a five-year period. This data makes clear the importance of explicit, mandatory safety standards for high chairs.

Methodology

To best conceptualize the significance of high chair product hazards, two main data sets were required: the SaferProducts.gov individual injury accounts and the National Electronic Injury Surveillance Survey (NEISS) data sets. These two data are distinct. SaferProducts is an extension of CPSC that allows individual consumers and medical personnel to self-report concerns and injuries regarding specific products. NEISS is a surveillance system that produces national estimates of emergency room visits associated with specific products, based off of a sample size of actual emergency room visits.

Neither of these two data sets is sufficient by themselves. SaferProducts produces both quantitative and qualitative data. Having qualitative data is helpful in identifying common product hazards and concerns, however, because it is self-reported, the quantity of reports is unequivocally smaller than the actual number of product incidents, as with all self-reported data collection, the majority of responses come from parents who are passionate about the failure of a product and aware of the database. Parents unaware, busy or not confident in their report will result in action will likely not issue reports to the website.

NEISS is a commonly used national estimate of emergency department visits, however, with changes in the marketplace and more individuals relying on pediatricians and urgent care, there is likely an undercount of children seeking treatment from a medical professional. Additionally, for the purpose of this report it was imperative to include high chairs, which are included in the ASTM standard, but not include booster seats or attachable high chairs which are not in the standard. In order to do this, the code 1555 for high chairs was required, but 1556 which codes for “attachable high chairs including booster seats” was not included. Making this adjustment, we were able to analyze years 2013 through 2017, but could not use the CPSC Annual Nursery Report which cleans for incidental data as it included the 1556 code according to the methodology section of their report.

Further, NEISS and SaferProducts function differently because they are able to produce accurate data under different collection periods. NEISS only produces data at the end of each calendar year, whereas SaferProducts can produce accurate number of data complaints daily.

In addition to these two data sets, www.CPSC.gov/Recalls was used to collect the specific high chairs that had been recalled between January 1, 2013 and May 31, 2018. This site also permits viewing specific number of reports and injuries that occurred prior to product recall. This often includes injuries that the manufacturer is aware of, but not counted in SaferProducts or NEISS. This site does not show the number of reports or injuries occurring after the recall of each product.

High Chair Recalls

In the five-year period from January 1, 2013 to May 30, 2018, there were seven high chair recalls (Table 1) and 77 high chair complaints reported to www.SaferProducts.gov on 36 different models (Table 2).

As shown in Table 1, high chair recalls can be issued in many stages of product release. Two products, the **Eat** and **Dinah** high chairs, were each recalled prior to any injuries or consumer reports of product hazards. Conversely, the **Safety First Wooden Décor** high chair wasn't recalled until 11 injuries and 68 consumer reports were issued. Within this five-year time span, the average number of consumer hazard reports to recall a high chair was 25 and the number of consumer injuries reported was three.

Of the 77 reports between January 1, 2013 and May 30, 2018, one type of chair was reported 20 times, the **Safety First Casablanca** high chair, which *was* recalled in October of 2015. However; only five additional models reported on this website were recalled, out of the remaining 57 reports and 35 high chair models.

Table 1. Recalled high chairs between January 1, 2013 and May 31, 2018. Recalls listed by www.CPSC.gov/Recalls.

Recalled Product	Manufacturer	Hazard	Units	Reports	Injuries
Convertible High Chairs	Skip Hop	Fall	79,000	3	2
Moon 3-in-1 High Chair	Mima	Fall & Impact	1,470	14	0
Eat High Chairs	Baby Home	Strangulation	1,100	0	0
Table2Table 6-in-1 Highchair	Graco	Fall	36,000	38	5
ZAAZ High Chair	Nuna Baby Essentials	Fall	56,000	50	6
Dinah High Chairs	Dream on Me	Strangulation & Fall	2,800	0	0
Wood Décor High Chairs	Safety First	Fall	35,000	68	11

Table 2. High chair incident reports by brand made on www.SaferProducts.gov between January 1, 2013 and May 31, 2018. Note that not all reports were for products made within this time period.

Brand	Reports	Number of Products	Number of Recalls
Safety First	25	3	1
Dorel Juvenile Group	13	4	0
Ingenuity	7	4	0
Evenflo	6	3	1
Baby Trend	4	3	0
Chico	3	2	1
Fischer Price	3	2	0
Graco	3	3	0
Carter's	2	1	0
Peg Perego	2	2	0
Jamberly Group, Inc	1	1	0
Delta	1	1	0
4 Moms	1	1	0
Fresco Chrome	1	1	0
Harmony Juvenile Products	1	1	0
I'coo	1	1	0
Mima Moon	1	1	0
Helen of Troy	1	1	0
Newell Rubbermaid	1	1	0
Total	77	36	3

Incidents After Recall

From the 77 consumer incident reports, 23 were posted after the manufacturer and CPSC issued a product recall (Table 3). This indicates the continued need for better consumer notifications about product recalls in order to prevent child injury. The two reports posted prior to the issued recall were both from the same product, the **Safety First Wooden Décor Casablanca** high chair.

“My 19-month-old daughter was sitting in her high chair, I was standing no more than 3 feet away getting her dinner ready to put on her tray. She pushed the tray, she fell, and hit her nose on a nearby chair. She cried and while consoling her I noticed blood rushing out of her nose. I rushed her to the hospital to make sure she wasn't badly injured, and after X-rays, they concluded that she had a contusion.”¹

Although Safety First did react to consumers injuries by issuing a recall, 18 additional incident reports followed the recall (Table 4). Had there been better notification to parents, stories like the

¹ Consumer report from 1/8/16; Safety First Wooden Décor Casablanca high chair: <https://www.saferproducts.gov/ViewIncident/1544816>

one above could have been avoided. Further, other designs by the company were reported in which hazards and injuries were not addressed, and no recall was issued.

Table 3. Number of incident reports on www.SaferProducts.gov between January 1, 2013 and May 31, 2018 by recall type.

Recall Type	Number of Reports
Prior to Recall	2
After Recall	23
No Recall	50
Unknown	2

Table 4. Safety First high chair incident reports made on www.SaferProducts.gov between January 1, 2013 and May 31, 2018 by product, hazard and recall type.

Product	Hazard	Incident Reports	Recall?	Before Recall	After Recall
Casablanca	Fall	20	Yes	2	18
Beaumont	Fall	2	No		
Lexi	Laceration	2	No		
Not Indicated	Fall	1	Unknown		

Recall Hazards

The main risk associated with an unsafe high chair is falling. Often the risk occurs as a result of the tray falling or being kicked out of place, a faulty strap or wheels which enable a high chair to be tipped easily.

Other risks connected to high chairs include entrapment, laceration and suffocation. Entrapment occurs when the buckle used to fasten a child in a high chair does not detach for the child to be removed, but it can also occur if the tray gets stuck in a latched position.

“[My son] kicks his legs and rests his feet on the underside of the tray. He started having mysterious injuries to his toes. Skin was missing. We eventually figured out that his toes were getting skinned from the underside of the high chair tray. There are sharp edges of plastic and exposed heads of screws.”²

Laceration is often the result of straps which may rub against a child’s skin or buckles which clip loose skin accidentally, or parts of the high chair that break off and may cut a child. Suffocation can occur when the strap on the high chair is too long.

High Chair Injury

² Consumer report from 6/21/13; Fisher Price Space Saver high chair: <https://www.saferproducts.gov/ViewIncident/1335533>

According to data collected by the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), there were 2,010 emergency department injuries from high chairs reported between January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2017. From these reports, NEISS estimates that there were approximately 53,808 high chair related injuries in the United States within this five-year period. Additionally, the 2017 CPSC Nursery Products Annual Report indicates that between 2012 and 2014 there were *two high chair related deaths*.

Table 4. National estimate of injuries treated in emergency departments by year between January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2017 according to NEISS estimates.

Year	National Estimate
2013	9,299
2014	9,803
2015	10,250
2016	12,355
2017	12,101
Total	53,808

Based on the NEISS data, the three most common emergency department injuries resulting from high chair incidents are: internal organ damage (45%), contusion or abrasion (19%) and laceration (13%).

Although high chairs are intended for children up to age 3, children between the ages of 10 and 12 months are the most at risk of injury. Of all reported injuries, 19% are from children in this two-month age group. According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), children between the ages of 6 and 12 months are fast learners and very interested in their new mobilities, as well as reaching for things they couldn't before. Alongside their newfound mobility, they are also more prone to falls, which is one of the main hazards associated with high chairs. Regardless of causes, with an average of 10,762 high chair related injuries annually, improved high chair safety measures are necessary to insure child safety.

Updating Safety Standards

On November 9, 2015, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) issued a [notice](#) of proposed rulemaking for high chair safety standards under Danny's Law. Following the notice, on May 30, 2018 the CPSC issued a briefing package to the Commission, recommending publication of a final rule concerning high chairs.

In a unanimous 4-0 vote, the commission approved the high chair rule. [The final rule](#) incorporates the voluntary standard, ASTM F404-18, as the mandatory federal safety standard for high chairs. In addition to standard household high chairs, commercial high chairs such as those used in restaurants will also be incorporated into law. This is a big step to ensuring babies are safe at home and out of home.

According to the publication, the standard will become effective 12 months after publication in the Federal Register, June 19, 2019. High chairs currently on the market or manufactured prior to this date do not have to comply to the new standard and could be for retail sale.

Action for Parents and Caregivers

KID urges every parent and caregiver to take the following **steps to protect the children in their care**.

- 1. Be aware:** Stay close when a child is in a high chair – falls can happen quickly. Use the restraint each time and remove children from their chair if they are struggling to climb out. As always, visit www.KidsInDanger.org for more information on children's product safety and to sign up for email alerts to stay up-to-date on recalled products. Consumers can also sign up at www.cpsc.gov to receive notice of recalls by email.
- 2. Always check products:** Take an inventory of all products used with children—at home, at childcare, and elsewhere—and check it against the list of recalls at www.cpsc.gov. Repeat the check every time a child receives a new product, gift, or hand-me-down. Check for other consumer reports at www.SaferProducts.gov.
- 3. Spread the word:** Report any injuries or problems with products at www.SaferProducts.gov. This benefits other consumers as well as allows CPSC to take action on dangerous products. After learning of a recall, share the news with friends and family and urge them to pass it along. Always fill out product registration cards or register online so manufacturers can send recall information. Product registration cards and online registration are required for durable infant and toddler products. You can find the registration websites for most child product manufacturers [here on KID's website](#).

Conclusion

Despite a great number of injuries in the past five years, there have been few high chair recalls. High chairs that were recalled in two occasions had no incidents or injuries, whereas other high chairs had numerous injuries and were not responded to with a recall. Without a mandatory high chair standard, on average, it took 25 consumer reports and 3 reported injuries before a manufacturer issued a high chair recall. Standardizing high chair safety, enforcing consistent safety regulation and increasing notification to consumers will make a big impact on child injury.

While the CPSC has passed a new mandatory high chair safety standard, it is still important to stay aware as a consumer. ***The new standard only applies to high chairs manufactured after June 19, 2019*** – so not products currently in stores. Additionally, after the standard goes into full effect, checking manufacture dates continues to be essential to make sure any new high chair purchased is compliant with the mandatory standard. Parents and caregivers should continue to vet the products they purchase and reap the benefits of mandatory notifications by filling out product safety cards, so they may be notified of future recalls.