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The Home  
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## Trampoline Safety

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), hospital emergency room-treated trampoline injuries almost tripled in the last decade - from an estimated 37,500 in 1991 to almost 100,000 in 1999. The CPSC has received reports of 11 deaths relating to trampoline use in that same period.

It is strongly suggested that you avoid purchasing a trampoline due to all of the safety hazards that are present. But if you are contemplating getting a trampoline for your children, be aware that nearly 2/3 of all trampoline injury victims were children ages 6 to 14 years old. And the injuries that occur are usually serious ones, with head and neck injuries being the most common.

If you do choose to purchase one, make certain that you follow these tips:

- ◆ Before purchasing a trampoline, make certain that you have an area that is safe. It should be placed on level ground. Also ensure that the area around the trampoline is free of objects that can cause an injury if someone falls of the trampoline. And don't place the trampoline near trees, poles, fences or other playground equipment. If at all possible, dig out a pit and place the trampoline at ground level.
- ◆ In selecting a trampoline, try to avoid buying a smaller unit (e.g., 12' diameter) as you will want the child to have a reasonable amount of space to recover if they get out of control. Also, make certain that you buy one that has a mesh net around the perimeter of it to help minimize a child falling or bouncing off of the trampoline. Ensure that the mesh has relatively small openings (there are many mesh nets that the openings are big enough for a finger to get caught, possibly spraining or breaking a finger). And make certain that pads cover the frame and springs.
- ◆ Place the trampoline in area that has at least 9" of shock-absorbing materials around it (e.g., pea gravel, mulch, chipped rubber, etc.)
- ◆ Establish and strictly enforce rules of use, that include:
  - Always have supervision of children when they are using the trampoline
  - Before each use, ensure that the mesh netting is acceptable and that the pads on the frame materials and springs are in good condition and properly secured. Replace any worn out padding or netting immediately.
  - Only allow one person to use the trampoline at a time.
  - Never allow a child to jump onto the trampoline from another object
  - Before each use, zipper the net shut.
  - Don't allow any child to wear any jewelry, especially necklaces and bracelets.
- ◆ After each use, make certain that you secure the net opening to minimize the possibility of a child using it when not supervised, and remove any ladder or means that will allow a child to gain access to the trampoline when not in use.

With trampolines in your backyard, it is always better to be safe than sorry.

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Louie Delaware, **The Home Safety Guru™**, president and founder of US Safety Pros, LLC is a Certified Child & Home Safety Professional in all aspects of home safety, from childproofing to home safety, radon testing & mitigation along with fire, carbon monoxide and barrier free construction. US Safety Pros has helped safeguard over 700 homes. For more information about Louie Delaware, go to his web site, [www.HomeSafetyGuru.com](http://www.HomeSafetyGuru.com).

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