

## Is Your TV Anchored to the Wall?

Now that days are getting shorter it won't be long before kids are spending more time indoors. Did you know that there are simple things you can do to make indoors safer, just like we make outdoors safer with things like soft playground surfaces, fences around pools or bike helmets on precious heads.

Would you be surprised to know that every three weeks a child dies as a result of a tv tipover? TV controls perched on top of a chest of drawers or large piece of furniture can be almost irresistible to a little one and often, they will stop at nothing to reach them. Kids will use their ingenuity to find a way to climb higher than their own height in order to reach something perched on top of a piece of furniture, often the tv controls. When they open drawers to climb, this creates instability and an unanchored television can come tumbling down on top of the child. There are other ways TV's and furniture can tip over too like chasing children or playful pets.

A TV tipping over onto a child can create the same force as a child falling from a ten story building causing serious injury or in some cases, death. 7 out of 10 kids injured by TV tip-overs are 5 years-old or younger and three out of four parents do not secure their tv's to the wall.

The new flat screen televisions are very unstable and lethal, but the old style televisions are equally dangerous due to their incredible weight. As parents and caregivers it's important to ensure that all furniture and televisions placed higher than your knee should be stabilized with straps or wallmounts. If you are concerned about making a hole in the wall, just remember that a hole in a wall can be easily mended, a hole in a parents or caregivers heart will never mend. Here are some things you can do right now:

- Mount flat screens to the wall
- If you have an older style television place it on a low, very stable piece of furniture, no higher than level with your knee.
  - Use brackets, braces or wall straps to secure unstable or top-heavy furniture to the wall.
  - Install 'stops' on dresser drawers to prevent them from being pulled all the way out. Multiple open drawers can cause the weight to shift, making it easier for a dresser to fall.
    - Keep heavier items on lower shelves or in lower drawers.
- Avoid placing remote controls, food, toys or other items in places where kids might be tempted to climb up or reach for them.

If you are a renter, you can still take the necessary precautions in order to protect your family. Please share this information with your landlord to find ways that you can work together to add these safeguards to your home.

To learn more, please contact: Beth Barnes, Community Health Outreach Specialist, North Country Hospital and Vermont Safe Kids Coalition member at [bbarnes@nchsi.org](mailto:bbarnes@nchsi.org)