

Change Table Safety



Injuries usually occur when a carer turns or moves away from the table to get something. Babies can fall when you least expect it. Shocked carers often report that the baby usually lies quietly and has never rolled over before the accident.



Always provide constant supervision when using a change table

A change table is a piece of furniture designed specifically for changing a baby's nappy at a comfortable height for the carer. It allows you to place your baby at a height where you can change a nappy with maximum convenience.

It is amazing how much time you will spend standing at the change table. Getting the right change table that is safe and comfortable for both of you can really help with this regular task.

Change Table Related Injuries

Falling is the cause of most injuries to children under 5 years of age (65%). A quarter of childhood injuries in the home environment are as a result of a fall from nursery furniture. Most injuries occur when a baby rolls to the side and falls off the change table.

Falls occur in children as young as three months, Head injuries are the most common injury, with many children requiring hospital admission. Children falling up to 1.5metres to the floor or onto another piece of furniture can suffer:

- serious injuries
- concussion
- fractures to the body.



Falls Prevention

Researchers estimate that 8 out of 10 injuries would be prevented by a correctly used restraint fitted to the change table. However, nothing is a substitute for constant adult supervision. It is far safer for the adult to get down to the child's level. If your back and knees allow, change baby on the floor or on a bed.

Safety Features for Change Tables

When purchasing a change table:

- Look for a model that is fitted with a child restraint.
- Select a strong and sturdy change table.
- Choose a model that has some form of roll-off protection such as raised sides and ends at least 100mm high.
- Include a concave shape change mat that is deep enough to stop the child rolling.
- Make sure there are no gaps or spaces near the changing surface that could trap a child's fingers, head or limbs.
- Check that storage areas located below the table are easy for you to reach.
- Check that the manufacturer's name and instructions are included with the product.
- If purchasing a portable or folding change table ensure the model is fitted with a mechanism to stop the product collapsing.

Alternative Method for Changing a Child

Consider whether you really want to use a change table. You can eliminate falling hazards by changing your child at floor level using a towel or change mat placed in a clean, dry area.



Safe Practices

- Preparation is important! Prepare for the child's change before proceeding.
- Keep everything you need to change baby close at hand.
- Use a child restraint to secure the child to the change table every time you use it.
- Ensure you provide constant supervision whilst the child is on the change table. Keep one hand on the child at all times.
- Never leave a child unattended on the change table. If you have to leave, take the child with you.
- Place anything that could harm the baby out of its reach, including open pins, bottles, lotions or creams and small items that may present a choking hazard.
- Maintain a routine to familiarise the child with the changing procedure
- Talk to the child as you do each step to maintain their attention. Some parents find it is easier to keep a baby still with a book or a toy.
- Ensure collapsible frames are locked securely in place before use.
- Be aware of older siblings climbing on change tables.
- Regularly check the condition of your change table. Repair any loose or broken parts straight away.
- Don't modify broken folding mechanisms or latches yourself.

For more information visit:

- Product Safety Australia productsafety.gov.au
- NSW Fairtrading fairtrading.nsw.gov.au

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