



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Stop Bathroom Breaks

Nonfatal Bathroom Injuries Among Persons Aged ≥ 15 Years — United States, 2008

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

One of the most common places people sustain injuries is in their own home; many of these injuries occur in the bathroom.

Dr. Judy Stevens is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. She's joining us today to discuss ways to make our bathrooms safer. Welcome to the show, Judy.

[Dr. Stevens] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Judy, how many people sustain injuries in a bathroom-related incident each year?

[Dr. Stevens] We estimated that in 2008, there were 234,000 injuries that happened in bathrooms, and two-thirds of these were to women.

[Dr. Gaynes] How do the number of injuries in the bathroom relate to, say the total number of injuries for people treated in emergency departments?

[Dr. Stevens] About one percent of the 22 million injuries treated in emergency departments were injuries in bathrooms.

[Dr. Gaynes] So are bathroom-related injuries more common in any particular age group?

[Dr. Stevens] Well, I already said that they happen more often for women, and we found that the injury rate increased with age, so people over 65 were more likely to be injured and also to have a more serious injury, like a fracture.

[Dr. Gaynes] How do most injuries occur in the bathroom?

[Dr. Stevens] We found that 80 percent were falls and many of these happened when people were taking a bath or a shower or when they were getting out of a bath or shower. And then, for older adults, many of their injuries happened when they were standing up or sitting down on the toilet.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are some strategies for making the bathroom safer?

[Dr. Stevens] You can add non-slip mats and non-slip strips to help prevent falls. But most importantly, you can have a contractor install grab bars, both inside and outside the tub or shower and, if there's an older adult, possibly next to the toilet to help prevent these injuries.

[Dr. Gaynes] Judy, where can listeners get more information about bathroom safety?

[Dr. Stevens] We have more information about reducing home injuries at our website www.cdc.gov/injury.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Judy. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Judy Stevens about ways to improve bathroom safety.

Remember, to help prevent bathroom-related injuries, use bathtub mats or non-skid strips to prevent slips, and grab bars to help with entering and exiting bathing areas. To make your bathroom safer, talk to a home contractor about installing grab bars.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.