Consumer Product Injuries during the COVID–19 Pandemic*

In the early months of the pandemic, hospitals were overrun with COVID–19 cases. Consumers avoided hospitals, except for the most serious injuries.

–24%
ER treatment for product–related injuries overall

–1%
The most severe injuries treated in ERs

School–related Injuries (including sports activities)

School–related injuries including sports activities dropped sharply by 81%. This drop is likely due to the suspension of school activities and youth sports leagues in the Spring and Summer months of 2020.

–81%

Fireworks

Fireworks and flares saw the largest increase across all age ranges. This increase is likely due to more consumers using these products at home, rather than in community settings with professional fireworks handlers.

56%

Bicycles

ER–treated injuries from riding bicycles went up 21% for consumers age 40 and older as they sought outdoor activity and exercise on bikes.

21%

Soaps & Detergents

Soaps and detergents saw a 60% increase in severe ER–treated injuries. These included injuries from liquid laundry packets, which continue to be a severe hazard for both small children and seniors if ingested.

60%

Face Shields & Masks

Face Shields and masks are part of a group of eye, ear, respiratory, and other similar products that rose nearly 40%, and for seniors over age 70, 109%. Most of the mask–related injuries were the result of skin irritations, with a smaller number due to being distracted while putting on or adjusting a mask, shortness of breath while wearing a mask, or vision being obscured from glasses fogging while wearing a mask.

38%

Cleaning Agents

Cleaning agents saw an 84% increase in severe ER–treated injuries likely due to increased exposure as consumers stayed home and increased cleaning and disinfecting efforts.

84%

Skateboards, Scooters, & Hoverboards

Skateboards, scooters, and hoverboards collectively saw a 39% increase in ER–treated injuries. This is likely due to more children using these products at home.

39%

Button Batteries

Injuries were often due to mouthing or swallowing or inserting in the child's nose. It is likely that the 93% increase in injuries to 5–9 year olds was due to increased exposure to batteries due to being at home more often.

93%

**Data from Consumer Product Safety Commission Report, "Effect of Novel Coronavirus Pandemic on Preliminary NEISS Estimates." January 2021.*
Report and COVID Safety Checklists available for download at CPSC.gov

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