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Information for

# Shoppers of Second-hand Products



Canada 

**Health Canada is the federal department responsible for helping the people of Canada maintain and improve their health. We assess the safety of drugs and many consumer products, help improve the safety of food, and provide information to Canadians to help them make healthy decisions. We provide health services to First Nations people and to Inuit communities. We work with the provinces to ensure our health care system serves the needs of Canadians.**

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Information for Shoppers of Second-hand Products is available on Internet at the following address:  
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# Introduction

## Be aware of product recalls!

Before buying a second-hand product, check with the manufacturer and Health Canada to see if it has been recalled. You can check for recalled items on the Health Canada website: **[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls)**.

If you discover that a product you bought has been recalled and the problem has not been corrected, destroy the product so it cannot be used by someone else, and throw it away.

It is important to be aware of the potential risks of buying second-hand items at garage sales, flea markets, second-hand stores, or online, or when borrowing items from friends or family.

In Canada, even though it is the seller's responsibility to ensure that their products are safe, meet current regulatory requirements, and have not been recalled, an informed consumer will make safer purchases.

Health Canada is interested in receiving reports of health or safety-related consumer incidents. If you would like more information or if you think you have a consumer product that could be dangerous, contact Consumer Product Safety, Health Canada:

**1-866-662-0666** or **[cps-spc@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:cps-spc@hc-sc.gc.ca)**

You can also report an incident online at  
**[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/reportaproduct](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/reportaproduct)**

## Put safety ahead of savings!

Do not purchase products if they are banned, damaged, or missing labelling or instructions.

**Look for labels on products.** Some products, such as cribs and car seats, need to have information stating the manufacturer, the model number, and the date of manufacture.

**Ask questions.** Ask the seller about the history of the product, for example: How old is it? How much use has it had? Have any repairs been made to it?

**Check if the product is damaged.** Check for cracks and broken, loose, or missing parts.

The *Canada Consumer Product Safety Act* (CCPSA) is administered by Health Canada. Its purpose is to protect the public by addressing and preventing dangers to human health or safety that are posed by consumer products in Canada.

The CCPSA and its regulations do not distinguish between new and used products. Any person who sells, distributes, or gives away consumer products not complying with the current regulatory requirements is breaking the law in Canada.

All cosmetics sold in Canada must meet the requirements of the *Food and Drugs Act*, the current *Cosmetic Regulations*, and all other applicable legislation.

The *Radiation Emitting Devices Act* covers such items as microwave ovens, personal stereo systems, and personal tanning equipment. For second-hand radiation emitting devices to be sold, they must also meet current standards.

## Partial List of Banned Products in Canada under the *Canada Consumer Product Safety Act*

These products are banned in Canada because they can present an unreasonable danger to human health and safety as a result of their normal or foreseeable use. It is illegal to sell them or give them away:

- Baby Walkers
- Infant Self-Feeding Devices
- Jequirity beans or anything that is made with jequirity beans
- Lawn Darts with Elongated Tips
- Polycarbonate Baby Bottles containing bisphenol A (BPA)

Common second-hand products that must meet regulatory requirements under the

# *Canada Consumer Product Safety Act or the Food and Drugs Act*

## Car Seats

- Car seats must display a National Safety Mark; do not buy a seat that does not have a National Safety Mark.
- Regulatory requirements change over time to address emerging safety concerns. Before buying a used car seat, you should ask the vendor or contact the manufacturer if you want to confirm that it meets the current regulatory requirements.
- Do not buy a car seat that has been in a vehicle during a collision. If the seller does not know the history of the product, do not buy it.
- Car seats must also come with warnings, guidelines for use, installation instructions, and date of manufacture.
- Car seats should not be purchased if they are past the lifespan recommended by the manufacturer.
- Ensure that the car seat has functional harness and anchoring systems that are in good working order.



National Safety Mark



- Only purchase a car seat in good condition with no missing parts.
- Rear-facing seats and front-facing seats are adapted to different stages of your child's development. Make sure you buy a car seat appropriate for your child. Some seats can be used for more than one stage of your child's development.
- For more information or to check for car seats recalls, contact Transport Canada at **1-800-333-0371** or visit their website: **[www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety](http://www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety)**.

## Children's Jewellery

- The importation, advertisement, or sale of children's jewellery that contains more than allowable lead limits as set out in the Canadian regulations is illegal.
- Lead is a soft and heavy metal, bluish-grey in colour when uncoated, that is often used to make inexpensive jewellery. Lead is poisonous when absorbed into the body. A child can suffer from lead poisoning if they suck, chew, or swallow jewellery containing lead.



- Jewellery containing lead that has a protective or decorative coating is not safe since children can easily chew off the coating.
- If you are not sure that the jewellery product does not contain lead, it is safer not to purchase it.

*Be aware of product recalls before buying an item!  
Check with the manufacturer and with Health Canada [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls)*

# Children's Sleepwear

- Children's sleepwear can be tight-fitting or loose-fitting with different regulatory requirements for each.
- Loose-fitting children's sleepwear includes nightgowns, bathrobes, and loose pyjamas. They should be made of polyester, nylon or polyester/nylon blends. Do not buy loose-fitting children's sleepwear made of cotton, cotton blends or rayon as testing has shown they burn more easily. Do not buy oversized t-shirts for children to wear as night shirts.
- Tight-fitting children's sleepwear includes polo pyjamas and sleepers (with tight cuffs at the end of sleeves and pants legs, close fit to the body). They are less likely to make contact with a fire source and are likely to burn more slowly. As a result, testing has shown they can be made from cotton, cotton blends or rayon.
- Cords or belts should be removed or stitched to the centre back of these products to prevent strangulation.



# Corded Window Covering Products

- It is not recommended to buy second-hand corded window coverings because they are more likely to have missing instructions, pieces or safety labelling.
- If you do buy a corded window covering, make sure they have:
  - tension devices attached to any looped pull cord;
  - devices on the pull cords to stop the inner cords from being pulled out; and
  - labels with instructions to keep pull cords out of the reach of children.
- Children can strangle on cords and bead chains of blinds and curtains. Looped cords, long pull cords, and the cords at the back of roman blinds can wrap around a child's neck and cause strangulation.
- Avoid buying window coverings that have exposed cords.
- Keep pull cords out of the reach of children at all times.
- Remember that children can climb furniture to reach dangling cords.



*Be aware of product recalls before buying an item!  
Check with the manufacturer and with Health Canada [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls)*

# Cosmetics

- Used, old, or damaged cosmetics should never be purchased second-hand.
- Second-hand cosmetics may contain harmful bacteria that could cause skin rashes or lead to infections.
- Also, second-hand cosmetics may be missing required labelling information, such as ingredients, warnings, and directions for safe use.



# Cribs, Cradles and Bassinets

- Regulatory requirements change over time to address emerging safety concerns. For example, cribs made before September 1986 are likely not to meet current regulatory requirements and should not be purchased. Before you buy a crib, ask when it was made.
- Health Canada does not recommend using cribs older than 10 years as they are more likely to have broken, worn, loose or missing parts, and be missing warnings or instructions.
- Cribs, cradles and bassinets must come with information that identifies the manufacturer, model number, date of manufacture, warnings, and assembly instructions.
- Check that the crib, cradle or bassinet is not damaged, broken, cracked, or missing parts.
- Wood and metal parts should be free of splinters or burrs and there should be no loose nuts or bolts.
- If a mattress comes with the crib, cradle or bassinet, it should be in good condition and, when firmly pushed against the frame, should not leave a gap of more than 3 cm (1<sup>3/16</sup> in.) between the mattress and any part of the frame.



- The spacing between the bars of the crib, cradle or bassinet should be no more than 6 cm (2<sup>3/8</sup> in.).
- The side height of cradles and bassinets should be at least 23 cm (9 in.). Cribs should have a side height of at least 66 cm (26 in.) when the mattress support is in the lowest position.
- Crib corner posts should be no more than 3 mm (1/8 in.) high.
- The crib's mattress support should be firmly fixed to the end panels. Cribs that have a floating mattress support system with S or Z-shaped hooks are not safe.

*Be aware of product recalls before buying an item!*

*Check with the manufacturer and with Health Canada [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls)*

# Ice Hockey Helmets and Face Protectors

- Ice hockey helmets and face protectors sold in Canada must carry a sticker indicating they meet safety standards set by the Canadian Standard Association (CSA) and clearly show the standard number.
- Face protectors that are sold separately from a helmet must have the mark printed on them. They must also have hardware for proper installation and instructions on how to install.
- Ice hockey helmets must have labelling with the date of manufacture, and a functioning chin strap.
- Ice hockey helmets usually last between three and five years depending on use. They should not be purchased if they were subjected to a major impact, are more than five years old, show signs of damage, or if parts are missing.
- Be careful, as damage done to helmets is not always visible. If you are unsure of a helmet's quality or condition, do not buy it.



# Playpens

- A playpen must have a label that states the manufacturer, the model, and the date of manufacture. Instructions for use should be included.
- A playpen must not have more than two wheels or casters or the ability to attach additional wheels or casters.
- Locking mechanisms must be in working order.
- Playpen mesh must be fine mesh like mosquito netting. There should be no torn vinyl or mesh.
- Joints and ends of metal tubing should be covered with a pad.
- Do not buy playpens that have protruding bolts and make sure that the ends of bolts are covered with tight acorn nuts.
- Straps or cords more than 18 cm (7.1 in.) in length must not be attached to the playpen.



*Be aware of product recalls before buying an item!  
Check with the manufacturer and with Health Canada [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls)*

# Safety Gates and Enclosures

- Safety gates must come with manufacturer's instructions and should be labelled with age restrictions.
- Do not purchase gates that have diamond-shaped or V-shaped openings larger than 38 mm (1<sup>1/2</sup> in.) along the top and/or sides.
- Every exposed wooden, metal or plastic part must be smoothly finished and free of splinters, burrs, cracks, and other defects.



# Smoke or Carbon Monoxide Detectors

- It is **not** recommended to buy used smoke or carbon monoxide detectors as these have limited life spans.
- Smoke detectors should be replaced every 10 years and carbon monoxide detectors should be replaced every five years.



# Strollers and Carriages

- Regulatory requirements change over time to address emerging safety concerns. For example, strollers and carriages made before 1985 may not meet current regulatory requirements and should not be purchased. Before you buy a stroller or a carriage, ask when it was made.
- Strollers and carriages must be accompanied by information that identifies the manufacturer, model number, and the date of manufacture.
- Strollers and carriages must come with a lap belt and crotch strap that is solidly attached to the seat or frame.
- Strollers and carriages must have a braking device in working order.
- Locking mechanisms on folding models should be in working order and wheels should be securely attached.



*Be aware of product recalls before buying an item!  
Check with the manufacturer and with Health Canada [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls)*

# Toys

- Toys that are in poor repair or broken, have sharp edges or points, or have loose eyes or noses are not safe and should not be bought second-hand.
- Know the age range of the children for whom you are buying. Some toys contain small parts that could pose a choking hazard to children less than three years old.
- Recently, there has been an increased number of recalls of toys with paint containing lead. Check for recalls with the manufacturer and Health Canada before buying toys ([www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls)).



# Toys with Magnets

- Check toys for loose magnets before purchasing, as loose magnets can be a swallowing hazard for young children.
- Unlike traditional magnets, small powerful magnets, such as rare-earth magnets, have a very strong magnetic pull, creating a unique safety concern. They are used in a wide range of items, from building toys to science kits or board games.
- Products with loose small powerful magnets should be kept safely out of the reach of children.
- Small powerful magnets that are loose or contained in a very small item are particularly dangerous. If more than one magnet is swallowed over a short period of time, they can attract one another through the intestines and create a blockage or slowly tear through the intestinal walls. The results can be fatal.
- Older children are known to play with these small powerful magnets in their mouths: using them for fake tongue or cheek piercings, attaching them to braces, etc. Teach children to keep powerful magnets away from their mouths.
- Recently, there has been an increased number of recalls of toys with magnets. Check for recalls with the manufacturer and Health Canada before buying toys ([www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls)).



*Be aware of product recalls before buying an item!  
Check with the manufacturer and with Health Canada [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls)*

# Examples of other common second-hand products that could pose a safety hazard

## Bunk Beds

- Only buy bunk beds that come with instructions for assembly and use, as well as warning labels.
- Check that there are guardrails on all sides of the top bunk. These should be attached.
- The ladder should be in good condition and securely attached to the bed.
- Corner posts or tops of the ladder uprights should not extend more than 5 mm (2/10 in.) higher than the adjacent surface, such as guardrails or end panels, to prevent snagging of clothes.
- Check to make sure the frame is solid; metal bunk beds with cracks in their welds should not be bought.
- The mattress should fit snugly on all sides and its sleeping surface be at least 127 mm (5 in.) below the top of the guardrails and end panels.
- Purchase only bunk beds meeting the latest ASTM F1427 standard – ask before you buy.



### Remember:

Children under six should never be sleeping in the top bunk of a bunk bed.

# Drawstrings on Children's Clothing

- Drawstrings on children's clothing should be removed before use.
- Drawstrings, especially on snowsuits, jackets, and hooded sweatshirts, can become caught on playground equipment, fences or other objects and cause strangulation.



## High Chairs

- Buy only a high chair that is in good condition, is stable, has a wide base to reduce the risk of tipping, and has no loose or missing parts.
- There should be a restraint system that consists of a crotch strap and a waist belt that is easy to fasten. The restraint system should be in good condition.
- All latching and locking mechanisms should be in good working order.
- Exposed wooden or plastic parts should be smoothly finished and free from splits, cracks, or other defects.
- Purchase only high chairs meeting the latest ASTM F404 Standard. Ask before you buy.

*Be aware of product recalls before buying an item!*

*Check with the manufacturer and with Health Canada [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls)*

# Helmets

Helmets are designed to protect the head against either single or multiple impacts. They can be certified through a number of organizations (for example, Snell, CSA, ANSI) and should have a label stating to which standard they have been certified.

- **Bicycle, in-line skating and equestrian helmets.** These helmets are designed to protect the head against a **single** impact. It is not recommended that you buy these products second-hand or that you borrow them from others.
- **Ski and snowboard helmets.** These helmets may be designed for single or multiple impacts. If you are unsure which type it is, Health Canada recommends that you do not buy it. Do not buy second-hand single impact helmets. If you decide to buy a multiple impact helmet, ensure it meets a recognized safety standard by checking for a label.



# Infant Bath Seats and Bath Rings

- **Bath seats and rings are not safety devices. Health Canada does not recommend the use of bath seats because they may give caregivers a false sense of security.**
- These products will not keep an unsupervised baby safe in a bathtub. Many babies have died when they were left alone in a bath seat or bath ring, even for seconds.
- It is not recommended to buy these products second-hand.



- The suction cups or other means to attach them to a bathtub may be worn and not work anymore.
- Labels with warnings and/or instructions that could have alerted you to the serious drowning hazard may be out of date or missing entirely.

## Portable Bed Rails

- Check the original packaging or manufacturer's website to determine if the portable bed rail requires the use of a standard bed with both a box spring and mattress.
- Only use portable bed rails that meet the requirements of the current ASTM International F2085 standard for portable bed rails.
- Portable bed rails can pose a suffocation hazard if a young child gets trapped between the bed rail and the mattress. Never use a portable bed rail for children who are younger than two years of age.



*Be aware of product recalls before buying an item!*

*Check with the manufacturer and with Health Canada [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls)*

Common second-hand products that must meet regulatory requirements under the

## *Radiation Emitting Devices Act*

### Microwave Ovens

- Ensure that the microwave oven is in good working order.
- Instructions for use should accompany the microwave oven.
- Do not buy a microwave oven with noticeable damage to the door or door hinges, as there may be excessive microwave leakage.

### Personal Stereo Systems

(for example MP3 Players, Portable Media Players)

- Instructions for safe use should accompany the device.
- Make sure that there is a functioning volume control enabling sound levels to be listened to safely without risk of hearing damage and ensuring that you can still hear the sounds around you safely.

For more information, contact Consumer Product Safety, Health Canada:

**1-866-662-0666**, email [cps-spc@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:cps-spc@hc-sc.gc.ca), or visit [www.healthycanadians.gc.ca](http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca) and [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps).

To check for consumer product recalls posted by Health Canada:

[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls).