

DOOR-RELATED *Finger Injuries*



Reality Alert

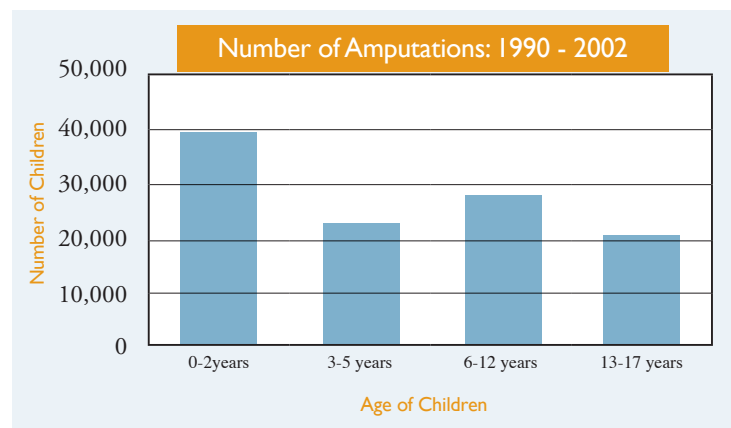
A 20-month-old child lost the tip of his finger after getting it caught in the hinge-side of a large metal door. Multiple employees were working at the child care center and all children were well supervised at the time of the incident. As one employee began taking another child outside, the 20-month-old followed and was trapped by the door. Even though the door was equipped with a slowing mechanism, the child was unable to avoid injury.

Several surgeries were required because the child's bone continued to grow through the finger. Eventually, the entire nail was removed and the tip was amputated.

The National Safety Council reports that **more than 300,000** door-related injuries requiring emergency room treatment take place each year. Children, especially those under the age of four, suffer most door-related injuries that ultimately require amputation.

Like other hazards young children face everyday, door-related injuries are easily preventable. A number of inexpensive and highly-effective products can prevent devastating injuries and claims.

Automatic door closers that slow down or prevent slammed doors can help prevent injuries around the doorknob side of the door, but most serious finger injuries take place at the hinge side of the door. As the door closes, the pressure exerted at the hinge area of a door can reach as much as 40 tons per square inch!



A number of companies manufacture easy-to-install hinge guards that essentially eliminate any exposure to serious finger injuries. A small plastic casing is placed around both sides of the door which blocks contact with the open hinge face. Placing door stoppers can also prevent unexpected closing.

In addition, painting or taping off the area in which the door swings can be a visual reminder for children and employees to stay out of the path of a swinging door.

Other Common Finger Injuries

Exercise Equipment –

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that over a four year period, 1,200 children had fingers amputated because of contact with exercise bikes and other exercise equipment. Most of the children were under the age of five. Never let children play on or near any exercise equipment.

Paper Shredders – From 2000 to 2005, the CPSC received 50 reports involving finger amputations from paper shredders. Children often imitate adult activities and may try to activate a paper shredder when an adult is not present. Children’s small fingers can easily be pulled into the paper shredding mechanism, even when an adult is supervising. Keep paper shredders unplugged and out of the reach of small children. Never, even with adult supervision, allow a child to operate a paper shredder.



Finger Safety Exercise

Door-related finger injuries are traumatic and potentially debilitating, but unfortunately they’re often impossible to prevent. There’s rarely someone at fault when such an accident takes place. We highly encourage anyone who regularly cares for children to consider installing hinge guards on every door in the facility.

To illustrate the potential for excruciating pain, carefully place a standard No. 2 pencil on the middle hinge of any door in your home or child care center. Be sure to move your fingers from the door. Once the pencil is carefully balanced, quickly close the door and witness what 40 tons per square inch of pressure can do to a child’s fragile finger.

What happens is shocking. Share this exercise with all employees and the children’s parents. After all, studies show that most of these injuries occur at home.