



Frequently Asked Questions

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS for Thudguard website

- **Q:** Why is Thudguard unique?

A: In 1997, to make the concept of an infants safety hat work, experts said the following:

“The hat would have to be lightweight, comfortable, attractive, protective and available in one size to cover the age group of approximately 7 months to 2+ years as parents would not value having to overspend on different sizes.”

One of the many reasons that Thudguard was granted its patent was because of the design eliminating the need for small, medium and large head sizing for a pre determined age group. A child’s head grows faster in the first few years than in any other time of life so Thudguard accommodates for this by stretching, or growing with the child a full 10 centimetres while still giving tested and certified impact protection. Thudguard is the only expandable head guard in the world that can claim this making this revolutionary new product truly unique. Thudguard complies with the Department of Trade & Industry’s’ Personal Protective Equipment Directive, Category II.

- **Q:** What is the difference between Thudguard and a cycle helmet?

A: The only similarity between Thudguard and the traditional cycle helmet is the outlining shape. There have been many different attempts at safety hat design but the most popular has always been the full head protection form. With this in mind, Thudguard began with this traditional and accepted appearance.

Thudguard is for babies and toddlers who are learning to walk in a world of hard surfaces and protects by acting as a cushion between the baby’s head and danger, usually when they fall over. The cycle helmet is hard, heavier and would not be suitable for this.

Thudguard is made from incredibly advanced lightweight foam that gives maximum impact protection around a baby’s head in the early years when the fontanelle or soft spot, can be vulnerable. Thudguard is not a hard helmet and it won't slide around; shifting weight and adding danger like hard, heavy helmets. Thudguard eliminates the weight and discomfort of leather, plastic and vinyl-covered latex headgear, and all the reasons why children refuse to wear protective headgear.

Q: When should my infant wear a Thudguard?

A: There are 3 stages where Thudguard may give the most benefit.

First stage: Usually the early months when baby is sitting up and/or crawling and especially if there is hard flooring. Thudguard can be used, (perhaps twice a day) usually after a nap when baby is most alert and wants to explore the ground of a safe allocated room. There should be very little resistance at this age to wearing a Thudguard if any at all but short periods are best, and give lots of praise. Baby will soon associate wearing a Thudguard with good exploring fun.

Second stage: It's wonderful! Baby becomes more energetic and starts to pull himself up against the sofa. Unfortunately, if he lets go, he can fall face first. Some time after assisting your baby with learning how to walk (see techniques of learning to walk), he may stop holding on to furniture for support and attempt to cross the floor to another part of the room on his own. This is a very proud and exciting time but you may be tempted to stick to him like glue for fear of falls. Every day, frantic parents rush into hospital after their babies have fallen off a bed, table, or over objects lying around. It happens so quickly! Babies can fall even with the most careful and attentive parents nearby. When babies fall, they usually land head first, since their centres of gravity are in their heads (adults' centres of gravity are in our bottoms). The head hits the floor with a terrible, ripe-melon-like "thud." Thankfully, most of these head injuries are minor. A clear safe area should be created in advance of baby walking with playpen breaks in between. If baby uses the Thudguard in the first stage, then he should be good-natured enough to wear it now. Thudguard can be used a few times a day, in short intervals, to allow baby to enjoy his new walking skills

Third stage: Your toddler although walking, may still be less than sure footed so a harness outdoors can be a great help but be prepared for the time when your toddler will insist that you let go and allow him to walk unaided. Toddlers love to run free and develop their newfound mobility and grass is usually a good soft landing. There will be times when there are concrete, patios, and garden furniture or play park equipment that you may be concerned about but cant avoid. Thudguard can give great peace of mind in this situation and your toddler will benefit from wearing this cute protective hat as an alternative safety measure.

- **Q:** Are there any techniques to assist my baby with when “learning to walk”?

A: Yes.

When you think your baby is ready, hold her gently around the ribcage underneath the armpits and "stand" her up. You'll notice that she will make "stepping" movements with her feet automatically. This is in preparation of learning to walk so practice as often as you both want to. If, however, after much practice, your baby seems interested in walking, but just can't get it all together, don't worry. Babies develop in their own time and have been known to walk unaided as early as seven months and as late as 20 months.

Reassuringly assist her and enjoy this wonderful time. Hold her hand and help this process along, guide her steps. Show her how to hang on to furniture for support and when she loses her balance, encourage her to bend her knees and fall back on to her bottom.

At the beginning of toddlerhood, she will probably walk slowly with her arms held out to the side or up in the air for balance, as if all walking surfaces were tightrope wires, and by the end she will be a two-footed locomotion.

- **Q:** Is using a Thudguard being “over protective”?

A: Quite the opposite! Research has shown that “over protective parents” tend to dread and avoid the “learning to walk” phase as much as possible. By their own admission, “over protective parents” claim that they have literally kept their babies in a bubble and may have involuntarily hindered their children as a result of their paranoia, causing them to become late developers in an attempt to evade the pain of their child falling over. *Source:* ILA independent questionnaire survey/Yahoo/Health/Parenting Health Centre.

Until you have a toddler of your own, other people's stories about how traumatic it was chasing their little wobblers around sound just a tad hysterical. I mean really, how hard can it be to keep up with a tiny person whom any grown-up can outrun in a race? It's when you become the warden of a toddler yourself that you realise speed isn't the issue; it's the length of the race and the unpredictability of the terrain.

➤ **Q:** Isn't pain a learning curve and bumping your head part of growing up?

A: If bumping your head could be 100% guaranteed to only result in a small discomfort and nothing more, then yes it could be a useful learning tool. If a baby can learn from pain, then she certainly wouldn't be able to put that knowledge into practise right away, as her body couldn't develop fast enough to! Did you learn to ride a bicycle or ice skate without falling a good few times? It takes time and practice to perfect balance and there's no point rushing it. But, you can make it a safer, better experience.

If it takes pain to gain knowledge then scraped hands when falling over can be an acceptable form of learning for a child and thankfully it is non-life threatening. This pain will still get the message across to the child that falling over does not feel good. It is a traumatic experience for all the family when a baby is taken to hospital with a head injury.

When asked, medical staff said that, *"thankfully, most children go home with just a small bruise but people are fraught because of their child's trauma and worry about the effects of their child being exposed to the radiation of the X-ray. Sometimes it's the shock of the wound receiving sutures and having to hold their baby still. There is also the worrying 24-hour observation period, not to mention the family arguing and the accusations of who it was that had failed to catch the child in time in the first place. It very rarely gets more serious than this but sometimes that's enough."*

Over half a million children under the age of 4 were taken to British Accident & Emergency Hospitals as a result of falls in one year alone, this would suggest that many parents, grandparents and carers don't see the learning benefits of their child's head whacking against any hard surface. *Source: Dti HASS/LASS*

Four percent of deaths in the U.S. result from accidents. According to the National SAFE KIDS Campaign, accidents are the MOST COMMON cause of death in children. *Source: health.yahoo.com/parenting*

➤ **Q: How did we manage before Thudguard came along?**

A: In a questionnaire survey, parents and grandparents were asked what they did to prevent their offspring from falling over when they were learning to walk in and outdoors. Below are the top 9 answers.

Indoors

1. *“Just watch them all the time.”*
2. *“The playpen keeps them in one place.”*
3. *“They are easier to look after when they are in their walking chair.”*
4. *“Put padding like pillows and stuff around the furniture.”*
5. *“Let them fall! They won’t do it again.”*

Outdoors

6. *“Keep them restrained from falling with a harness.”*
7. *“Only let them play on grass.”*
8. *“Falling is part of growing up.”*
9. *“Don’t let them out of the buggy.”*

Some of the above can be brief solutions but sooner or later your child will need to be allowed to develop newfound mobility and Thudguard may be an excellent alternative to those choices. Most parents, grandparents and carers make sure that a safe environment is available where there is a high priority on vigilance. But accidents often happen even in the most careful of situations. Thudguard is just one more option that we didn’t have before, taking the safety straight to the child’s head by reducing the risk of head injury even more.

Some of the options from our questionnaire above clearly show a need and desire to prevent the possibility of head injury, apart from option 3, the walking chair, this just made life easier, and option 5 & 8 which suggests that pain is knowledge (see FAQ’s – “is pain a learning curve?”). There is much controversy over the walking chair being dangerous and causing more harm than good and even death. Research thoroughly before deciding to get one. For more information on products and safety and how to “child proof” your house, visit the RoSPA and the Child Accident Prevention Trust websites.

➤ **Q:** Will Thudguard encourage me to let my baby take more risks?

A: If your baby walks across the room unsteadily and looks like he is about to stumble and fall, your instinct will be to catch him regardless if he is wearing head protection or not. After all, you wouldn't be lulled into a false sense of security and let your pre-school child cycle on the road just because he is wearing a cycle helmet! Just like you would teach your child how to safely cycle, ice skate or swim, you will set safe boundaries for your baby to learn how to walk. You may have a lot more peace of mind when your child is wearing a Thudguard but the fact that you are safety conscience enough to get a Thudguard in the first place, suggests that your not a parent to take risks.

“risk compensation factor”

We have all heard the argument that forcing drivers to wear seatbelts will lead to reckless driving due to the increased feeling of safety. This old argument is completely ridiculous and not grounded in fact. Whilst there is no strong evidence that the wearing of seatbelts have significantly reduced the number of deaths from road traffic accidents, there is no doubt that they have significantly reduced the severity of the injuries sustained by individuals involved in such accidents.

When a new safety product comes on the market it is common for attention to focus on whether or not this product will actually save lives. This is to miss the point. Thudguard does not claim to significantly have an effect on very serious head injuries but, as stated, may significantly reduce the number of minor head injuries which occur. This may not only reduce discomfort associated with such injuries amongst the patients but also have an impact on the workload of the emergency services with regards these injuries.

- **Q:** What safety standards does Thudguard meet?

A: Thudguard complies with the Department of Trade & Industry Directive - Personal Protective Equipment, Category II.

In 2003 an expert was commissioned to develop a technical specification stating the impact testing requirements that an infant safety hat would have to pass to gain the recognised CE marking and to comply with a known directive. The procedure of gathering the information required was similar to that of the testing criteria of the bicycle helmet. Various standards were sited and a harmonised collaboration of essential criteria needed was developed. The impact levels that were set for existing headgear was modified and applied to Thudguard to represent the impact levels of protection that babies and toddlers would need when falling over while learning to walk. Thudguard was independently tested, passed and certified by a leading international test house where various simulated impacts against anvils representing radiators, door edges, patio slabs, sharp corners pavement kerbs etc., were carried out. Thudguard has truly set the standard to perform to.

- **Q:** How do I fit the Thudguard properly so it won't cover my baby's eyes?

A: Children have been recorded as starting to walk as early as 7 months old. With this in mind Thudguard was designed to accommodate a small head size of 40cm circumference but may cover the child's eyes if not positioned correctly. This is easily put right by resting the hat further back on the head to allow a clear view. The chinstrap will keep it in this position. Keep checking that the hat has not been knocked forward or that the child has not pulled it forward. Always make sure that the child can see where she is going.

- **Q:** My child won't wear hats. How can I get him to wear a Thudguard?

A: It is best to introduce your baby to Thudguard at an early age, as it will be more readily accepted. (The acceptance of a Thudguard will also help promote the wearing of a cycle helmet when that time comes.) If however, you present Thudguard to an older toddler, there may be some resistance, as most children don't like to wear hats at the best of times. It is easier to try putting on a Thudguard to your child when he is preoccupied with playing or just before leaving the house or going out to the garden. Sometimes if its all done fast with excitement, there is no time for the toddler to realise he has had the hat put on! If it doesn't work first time, don't let it ruin your child's fun, after all, it's more important to develop emotional skills than motor skills. Try again another time with gentle perseverance and praise. It will work eventually.

➤ **Q:** Is Thudguard heavy?

A: Thudguard is probably the lightest head protector in the world weighing approximately 100 grams making it perfect for a baby developing neck muscles.

➤ **Q:** Is my child getting too big for a Thudguard as it leaves a small red mark on his forehead?

A: A ready reference graph from Paediatrics shows that, the average child's head, aged between 7 months and 2+ years, measures from approximately 40cm to 50cm circumference. Naturally, this can vary and some children in this age range have been recorded as having up to a 53cm head circumference. As the Thudguard design is based on the elastic around the front and back panels stretching, some tension may cause closer skin contact leaving a red mark or imprint similar to socks or clothing with elastic waistbands. This can also happen if the child has a lot of hair or due to over heating, (see user instructions in hot weather). These marks have been shown to fade within 5 – 10 minutes but do not resume with Thudguard if there is noticeable discomfort to the child due to tension of the band.

➤ **Q:** Can I use my Thudguard for my next baby?

A: Yes, as long as there is no obvious damage from a previous impact injury or damage due to storage or misuse of the Thudguard as this may affect the level of protection performance. This shouldn't happen, as the materials used in Thudguard are very resilient. Always refer to your user leaflet or website to refresh on conditions of use.

➤ **Q:** Is my baby's soft spot (fontanelle), really that vulnerable?

A: No. True, it can make some rare accidents more dangerous (direct penetrating trauma to that spot by protruding or sharp areas), but for the most common falls experienced by all babies, the soft spot cushions and protects.

➤ **Q:** What happens if my toddler does have a head injury?

A: If only we could bottle kids' marvellous energy. It's better than solar power! Still, their energetic exploration of life often results in bumps and bruises to the head. Fortunately, most of these are not serious. Nevertheless, when we hear the awful thud of a child's head, our breath catches and for a moment...

Youngsters seem to be always "banging" their heads on something. It's difficult to know how to respond. There are some general guidelines for when it is serious and when it isn't. Don't feel bad contacting medical professionals. Trust your instincts. You don't want to be calling for every little thing, but you certainly don't want to miss something important.

HEAD INJURY ADVICE

Symptoms for concern:

- Loss of consciousness (however brief)
- Vomiting (even once)
- Sleepiness or difficulty in waking
- Persistent headache despite regular paracetamol
- Altered vision
- Memory loss of the fall

Some of these symptoms may be difficult to assess in a small child. Should you have any concern about your child following a head injury then you should seek medical advice.

Thudguard may protect your child's head from bumps and bruises but a significant fall could still result in a head injury. A child who sustains a head injury (whether or not the child is wearing head protection), and has any of the above symptoms, must be seen by a doctor – either your own family doctor or at an Accident & Emergency department.

After reading a list like this it is tempting to try to protect your child from every situation that might result in an injury. It is appropriate to use good judgement in deciding which environments are safe for your child, but it is also important to allow him the opportunity to express himself through physical activity. Sometimes growth means taking risks and appropriate risks are worth taking!

N.B. Stair gates for infants and toddlers, car seats, seat belts, and helmets for riding a bicycle or roller-blades prevent many serious head injuries. Make sure your child is properly equipped for his activities.

➤ **Q:** I have found a similar product. Will it do the same as Thudguard?

A: Thudguard is a protected and patented product. If there is a similar product it may be infringing on patent rights. But more importantly than that, a similar product may not be fit for its purpose. Thudguard took 7 years to complete because of the extensive research and development to make it the best and safest infant protective hat possible. Over the years, Thudguard has been fortunate enough to have had the top safety and medical experts involved with its progress, ensuring babies and toddlers were delivered its promise to protect.

Check for the following on looking for an infant safety hat;

1. Does it comply with a recognised safety regulation?
2. What impact tests has it passed?
3. Has it been wet, cold, UVA and heat condition tested?
4. Does the design give ventilation whilst still maintaining maximum head coverage for protection, or are there very large exposed areas that give cause for concern?
5. Does it look like it will protect a child's head?

Your child deserves the best. Accept no substitutes.

➤ **Q:** Do infants fall over a lot?

A: Statistics / How / When head injuries occur in children under 4 years old.

Over half a million children under the age of 4 were taken to British Accident & Emergency Hospitals as a result of falls in one year alone.

Source: Dti HASS/LASS

1 million children in the US sustain a head injury each year.

165,000 children will be hospitalised due to a head injury.

1 in 10 of those children hospitalised will suffer moderate to severe impairments.

Source: USA Brain Injury Stats/http://www.altelco.net/~jame/tbi/tbistats.htm

Younger children spend more time at home than in any other environment and home is where they are most likely to be the victims of accidents and injuries, especially as the result of falls. Statistics published by the National SAFEKIDS Coalition show that more than 80 % of fall-related injuries among children ages 4 and under occur in the home. Falls can cause many kinds of injuries including abrasions, lacerations and fractures of bones in the arms and legs. But the most serious consequence of falls, and the reason for a large number of urgent calls to emergency rooms and paediatricians' offices, involves injuries to the head as a result of new found mobility in and outdoors.

Infants - Among infants under the age of 12 months head injuries are most often associated with falls onto hard surfaces, from furniture, changing tables or counter-tops and with falls down a flight of stairs. Many accidents in which an infant falls down stairs occur when a baby in a mobile walker inadvertently goes over the top step and tumbles down headfirst.

Toddlers - Because of their increased mobility and restless curiosity toddlers are more vulnerable to injury than children in any other age group. In addition to falling down stairs, they often fall after climbing onto chairs, counter-tops and against household appliances. Even more serious injury may result when a toddler climbs up into an open window and falls out. Improved motor abilities place them at greater risk for falling outdoors. Many injuries occur to children in this age group while they are using playground equipment such as seesaws, swings and slides.

Thank you for choosing Thudguard

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