

Parents debate drop-side cribs after recalls

Tweet 17

With drop-side cribs soon to be banned, families with hand-me-downs should be vigilant

Recommend 42

By
LISA A. FLAM

Associated Press

updated 2/15/2011 1:21:17 PM ET

Margie McGlone brought one key item into her nursery when she was pregnant last summer. It was her sister's crib, one they both loved and looked forward to keeping in the family.

"I thought it'd be cool for my son to have grown up in the same crib as his cousins," said McGlone, whose older sister had held onto the crib through three moves after her children outgrew it.

Then McGlone got nervous, learning that millions of drop-side cribs were being recalled after at least 32 strangulation and suffocation deaths were linked to them. "I was like, wait a minute, this is a drop-side," said McGlone, of Bronxville, N.Y.

[TODAYMoms: Short moms bemoan ban on drop-side cribs](#)

Her niece and nephew had been fine in the crib, an antiqued-white model with painted gold accents. And the company had a kit to make the sides immobile. But as a new-mom-to-be, she was too worried, especially after seeing depictions of the potential hazard — a baby's head getting stuck after a side detached.

Though nervous to break the news to her sister, she took apart the beloved heirloom and bought a crib with stationary sides for her son, Finley, born in November.

"I thought, I can't in good conscience — knowing they're all being recalled and all being changed, I can't keep it. I can't use it," she said. "Every time he was in it I wouldn't feel comfortable."

More than 10 million drop-side cribs were recalled in recent years, culminating with the [Consumer Product Safety Commission's](#) announcement in December that after decades of use, the sale of drop-side cribs was being banned.

Starting in June, it will be illegal to sell a crib with a side that moves up and down, a once-common feature that lets you reach in and pick up a baby with ease.

"We're sensitive to tough economic times," says commission spokesman Scott Wolfson. "We hope people will go out and buy the safer cribs."

Many large retailers stopped selling drop-side cribs more than a year ago in anticipation of the new standard, and experts believe many parents are using cribs with fixed sides. But baby furniture is so frequently passed down, to preserve memories and cut costs, that the traditional style remains in nurseries, grandparents' homes, basements and attics everywhere.

So where does that leave parents who used a drop-side crib without a problem for one child but now, as a new baby arrives, find the design being outlawed?

For some, a close examination of the crib is just what it takes to feel safe.

In Indianapolis, Heather Ray uses a crib given to her by another family before her daughter, Hadassah, was born in June. The family told her it hadn't been recalled, and Ray made sure the hardware was fastened correctly, testing the crib by putting weight on it.

"We saw it as a blessing from God we didn't have to spend that extra money," she said. "We don't have any safety issues with it. I feel that it's perfectly safe, and I'm not nervous about her being in it."



More than 10 million drop-side cribs, similar to the one shown here, were recalled in recent years, culminating with the Consumer Product Safety Commission's announcement in December that after decades of use, the sale of drop-side cribs was being banned.

Health highlights



Reach out to a cheery pal -- it's good medicine

Happy friends not only keep us healthier, but can help us live longer, research shows. Why are cheerful friends good

medicine?

[Dirty truth: Guys' pads have way more germs](#)

[Report: Energy drinks can be dangerous for teens](#)

[Real cooties? Boys catch flu from boys, study says](#)

[Crocodile tears? How to spot a fake apology](#)

Jenine Capano puts her baby girl to sleep in the same drop-side crib her two sons slept in without any trouble. News about the crib style caught her attention, but the company that made the crib was out of business, so she couldn't check for a recall.

"I put the side up and down a few times to try to decide if it was safe or not, and my husband and I felt it was still safe," said Capano, of Yonkers, N.Y. "It's always been great."

"Since I thought what we have is perfectly safe, I see no reason to spend more money on a new crib," she added.

Other families are deciding that a replacement crib is in order.

Last summer, Jessica Drukin of Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y., replaced her 15-month-old son's hand-me-down drop-side crib because the side wasn't locking properly, and she was aware of the potential hazards. "We got rid of it once I did not feel it was safe," she said.

While it won't be illegal to have a drop-side at home when the new standard takes effect, the safety commission urges parents to get one with fixed sides. If they can't, they should investigate whether their crib has been recalled, is missing any pieces or has sustained any damage.

"These types of issues have caused babies to be in harm's way," Wolfson said. "We don't want them to be a problem in the future."

The commission says the newer the crib the better, and is wary of cribs older than a decade. If non-recalled drop-side cribs are used, Wolfson said parents should not lower the side and should use an immobilizer if the manufacturer offers one.

The [Juvenile Products Manufacturing Association](#), an industry group, says any crib that was purchased new and has not been recalled should last for a decade if it's been properly stored and assembled.

On the other hand, [Keeping Babies Safe](#), a child safety group, strongly discourages the use of any drop-side cribs.

"Parents shouldn't be using them," says Joyce Davis, president of the group, which together with the commission and the American Academy of Pediatrics, made a safe sleeping video that's being shown in hospitals and doctor's offices. "They should not be lackadaisical. They should get a new crib that meets the current standards."

Davis said she believes more and more families are getting rid of drop-side cribs. She realizes parents' desire to save money or hold onto a crib out of nostalgia, but says that because a crib is a place where a baby can be left alone, safety must come first. "You can't have a sentimental attachment to that crib because it's no longer safe," she said.

For now, McGlone's first crib is back in her attic at her sister's behest.

"She wouldn't let me get rid of it," she said.

Copyright 2011 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

