

CareFlight news

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CareFlight urges Australian parents to be aware

Seven-year-old Sahra learnt first hand the dangers of window falls. Read her story in the Christmas Appeal on our website www.careflight.org



Window tips to keep your child safe

- Do not open windows more than 10 cm when located above the ground floor.
- Have window latches/locks fitted to stop windows opening more than 10 cm, or install guards to protect the opening.
- Where possible, open windows from the top to prevent access.
- Keep furniture and anything else on which a child can climb away from windows.
- Do not rely on flyscreens to prevent a child from falling out of a window.
- Set rules that your child may not play near windows, especially the activity many kids love – jumping on the bed.

As the weather warms up, CareFlight is urging Australian parents to beware of a potential killer in every home – the open window.

Every week an Australian child falls from a window or balcony, often with severe or even life-threatening injuries. Most injuries occur during the warmer months of the year, when windows are opened – so now is the perfect time to talk to your kids about the danger of falling from heights.

CareFlight flies to many injured children each year and is appealing to parents to follow some simple window safety tips at home. Dr Andrew Weatherall, paediatric anaesthetist and CareFlight doctor, has seen the effects of window falls first hand.

“Children can suffer horrific injuries from balcony or window falls,” Dr Weatherall said. “This can include skull fractures, brain injuries, neck injuries and limb fractures. As the weather heats up it is imperative that we spread the message of home safety far and wide.”

Many parents think that a flyscreen is strong enough to stop a child from falling through a window. This is not the case.

Many children are admitted to hospitals for emergency treatment following a fall from a window through a flyscreen. After all, flyscreens are designed to keep flies out, not children in.

Often children who have fallen from windows had been playing on furniture placed near the window. Wherever possible, furniture should not be placed beneath opening windows as it creates a platform upon which young children could climb or from which they could launch themselves.

New laws in some states require second story windows to be modified to prevent them opening more than 10 cm. CareFlight recommends all parents consider such window modifications on all windows regardless of the height from the outside ground.

“Most of all we suggest you take the time to talk with your children about the dangers of window or balcony falls,” said Dr Weatherall, himself a father of young children. “Regardless of the height of your house it is important for kids and parents to know what to look out for. It may not be your home where the accident occurs. Education is the key.” ✕



Jetsetting medical crews

CareFlight medical teams have been busy treating and transporting patients not only within Australia, but also overseas.

Utilising Medi-jets to cover longer distances faster and more safely, CareFlight medical teams play a pivotal role in patient transport within Australia, Australasia and even further afield.

In addition, CareFlight teams have conducted long-haul missions utilising commercial aircraft. These missions can be from one side of the world to the other and can take up to eight days to complete. One such mission involved transporting an elderly man with cancer from Cairns home to Costa Rica, a trip which involved multiple flights.

For more information on CareFlight International Air Ambulance, visit the CareFlight website. ✕



Main: CareFlight's original stretcher bridge in operation during the late 80s. Inset: A current stretcher bridge model.

25 years on and the stretcher bridge is world standard

“We were continually challenged with the problem of how to maintain life support between the hospital and the aircraft at either end of the retrieval. Presently we had no choice but to remove the equipment and place it ad hoc on top of the patient,” wrote Dr Ken Wishaw in his book about CareFlight’s beginnings, ‘Helicopter Rescue’.

“Using our existing stretchers as a base, I drew up a box with two shelves and four legs that could fit over the patient and carry all our life-support and monitoring equipment. I made a crude cardboard mock-up using boxes I pinched from the hospital rubbish bins. I was beginning to think that the thing might have potential.”

Little did Dr Wishaw and the team know then, but the invention they were working on, soon to be called the ‘stretcher bridge’, would one day become the world standard for aeromedical monitoring equipment. The idea would result in the patient monitoring equipment staying with the patient

from the beginning of their rescue until they were safely in their destination hospital. The concept was simple, but the engineering was complex and the approval process slow and frustrating. Eventually though, the team prevailed and launched CareFlight’s first fully engineered stretcher bridge.

Today stretcher bridges can be found on medical aircraft all over the world. They have evolved over the years, yet their purpose and function remain the same – to keep the patient under full intensive care monitoring throughout their retrieval.

CareFlight recently purchased new stretcher bridges for use on the Northern Territory aircraft. It’s great to see that with some ingenuity, a little cooperation and, most importantly, community support, what began as a simple solution to a basic need has become a life saver the world over.

To purchase a copy of Dr Ken Wishaw’s book ‘Helicopter Rescue’, visit the CareFlight online shop at www.careflight.org ✕

PHANTOM will shed light on the injured brain

“We currently ask the thumb to tell us how the brain is absorbing oxygen – there must be a better way,” said CareFlight doctor Andrew Weatherall in a recent interview regarding CareFlight’s newest medical trial. “We need better information on how the brain tissue absorbs oxygen in the minutes and hours post injury. It will help us better treat traumatic brain injuries.”

Enter the PHANTOM trial - Pre-Hospital Assessment of Noninvasive Tissue Oximetry Monitoring. Similar to probes that you might have had placed on your finger to measure oxygen levels, tissue oximetry monitoring relies on detecting light of different wavelengths after they have been shone into tissues.

“Unlike our other monitors, it can provide us with direct information about what is happening in cerebral tissue in real time,” Dr Weatherall said.

There is already evidence that it is possible to diagnose where there may be brain haemorrhage or haematoma. There is also evidence from the hospital setting that there is a correlation between oxygen levels in brain tissue over the first few days of a brain injury and neurological outcomes up to six months later, and that improving these oxygen levels results in better outcomes.

There has been no equivalent research done in the pre-hospital setting anywhere in the world.

CareFlight’s new trial, set to begin this month, will conduct observational research, applying monitoring to patients treated on scene at incidents and transported to hospital. Each patient observed will then be followed up for 12 months after their injury to assess long term recovery. ✕

Community support allows CareFlight to constantly research and develop better systems, procedures and equipment. Regardless of where you live, the learnings from this trial may help treat you or a family member in the future and improve your outcome or even save your life.

For more information about the PHANTOM trial visit the CareFlight website or scan the QR code.



Well prepared medical care

A 19-year-old construction worker is lucky to be alive after being struck in the head and impaled by a reinforcing bar in August.

Ambulance Service paramedics called CareFlight, and a trauma team comprising Dr Adam Osomanski, Dr Tom Wallis and paramedic Ben Southers flew to the scene. Together with the Ambulance paramedics, they stabilised the patient while fire officers worked to cut him free. He was then transported to hospital, accompanied by the CareFlight doctors and the paramedics.

The critically injured man underwent emergency surgery to remove the bar which had penetrated 8 cm into his forehead, narrowly missing his right optical nerve and a major artery. He is making an excellent recovery.

Working in the unpredictable world of retrieval medicine, CareFlight rapid response trauma teams never know exactly what awaits them. However, they are trained to be prepared for the unexpected and were well equipped to deal with the scenario that faced them that day. ✕

Newest doctors receive training

CareFlight's newest recruits recently received intensive pre-hospital trauma training to prepare them for work in aeromedicine. Twelve new doctors were trained on the latest course which was held across five days and involved a range of scenarios.

"It is crucial training that brings these registrars from exceptional in-hospital staff to multi-rolled retrieval specialists," said Dr Ken Harrison, Director of Education & Training. "We use simulation training combined with theory sessions to give the registrars a detailed understanding of what they may encounter in the field."

Scenarios included a motor vehicle accident involving three patients who needed to be extracted from a flipped

car. One of the patients, a young child, required lifesaving procedures to be carried out on the roadside before he could be stabilised for transport to hospital.

The final scenario, an impalement, was chillingly similar to a real-life case undertaken by a CareFlight trauma team just days later (see story on page 2).

"CareFlight is proud of the standards to which its medical teams are trained. We thank the community for their ongoing support that enables us to provide world-class treatment at the accident scene," said Dr Harrison.

CareFlight recruits doctors, nurses and paramedics and provides all necessary training and support. More details are available on the CareFlight website. ✕



Mines benefit from CareFlight expertise

The CareFlight education and training team have been busy providing trauma training to the resources sector. The team, comprising specialist doctors, nurses and paramedics, utilises state of the art training props to teach remote workers lifesaving skills.

Many resource sector work sites are more than 150 km from the nearest major hospital which means they are required to have robust emergency medical response plans. CareFlight is providing clinical governance, training, equipment and aeromedical evacuation allowing patients to be treated and transported quickly and safely.

A recent training course, held over two

days, included a range of theory lessons, skills stations and scenarios. Participants learnt a wide variety of subjects including airway management, vascular access, cardiac arrest drills, difficult extrication and haemorrhage control. Highlights for the participants were their interaction with the expert staff who delivered the training and CareFlight's unique Inverted Car Crash Rescue Simulator.

As a charity, CareFlight uses surplus earnings from such activities to re-invest in community service provision, community training, research and development. If you would like more information on how CareFlight can assist with remote site services see the CareFlight website. ✕

CareFlight MediSim continues national tour

After a successful tour through the Northern Territory, CareFlight MediSim has continued through Western Australia, training emergency service personnel and first responders in trauma care.

The program travelled through the Kimberley region from Kununurra in the east to Broome in the west, from Perth to Albany, Bunbury to Kalgoorlie and then Norseman. In Western Australia alone the program has trained well over 100 first responders, travelling over 6,500 km in the process.

Rural Victoria was the next to benefit, with workshops held in Orbost, Bairnsdale, Shepparton and

Dimboola. Local volunteer firefighters, State Emergency Service volunteers, Ambulance service volunteers and Police participated in the workshops. All have reported a great increase in skills and confidence when dealing with a trauma patient.

The program, supported by sponsor Johnson & Johnson and significant community funding, is set to continue its national tour with the next leg including Tasmania. For more information on how you can help CareFlight provide trauma training to rural and remote Australia, see the MediSim section of the CareFlight website. ✕



Crew members saving lives

CareFlight's loyal band of Support Crew Members are continuing to help save lives every day throughout Australia.

The CareFlight Support Crew is a group of like minded individuals who give a monthly donation to CareFlight. This type of funding is crucial to CareFlight – it is a stable form of income that allows us to plan for day to day expenses and purchase the equipment needed to save lives.

Kevin Cummins has been a Support Crew Member since January 1999.

“Over a number of years I had been aware of the wonderful service provided by CareFlight. They take lifesaving hospital care to patients and have now extended their service to the Northern Territory,” said Kevin. “I am more than happy to continue to be a Support Crew Member.”

CareFlight's Relationship Development Manager Scott Monaghan wears the Support Crew Member T-shirt.



Monthly giving is also a very convenient way for you to donate. It saves you time and allows you to spread your donation evenly over the year. Donations can be deducted from your bank account or credit card.

“Monthly giving is a very cost-effective way in which you can help CareFlight. It minimises our fundraising costs and allows us to plan ahead knowing that funds will be available,” said Trent Osborn, Head of Fundraising at CareFlight. “Our Support Crew members provide an important income stream which helps fund our day to day emergency missions.”

Annette Willett, past patient and avid CareFlight supporter, recently wrote to CareFlight to say: “Eight years ago CareFlight saved my life. I became a Support Crew Member to ensure that CareFlight will always be around to save the lives of others.”

CareFlight Support Crew Members receive event invitations and newsletters to keep them informed about how their donations are helping to save lives. Members who donate \$20 per month or more also receive a special member T-shirt.

For more information on becoming part of CareFlight's Support Crew, fill in and return the coupon below or see the ‘Monthly Giving’ section of the website. ✕



CareFlight online shop

CareFlight's online shop recently celebrated one full year of smooth operation. Many donors took the opportunity to support our lifesaving charity by purchasing bears, models, merchandise, books and other items online.

A full collection of models of the CareFlight fleet, from 1986 to the present, appears on the online shop. Bears are always popular and have been the highest seller since the shop began.

Purchases can be made via the website and items are mailed straight to your home or business on the next working day. To make your purchase today see the CareFlight website or scan the QR code ✕



Help CareFlight save more lives by becoming a Support Crew Member



Becoming a member of the CareFlight Support Crew is a great way to take your existing support to the next level – and play an

important role in saving lives every day.

As a member of the CareFlight Support Crew you will be invited to special members only base visits. You will have the opportunity to meet the CareFlight Crew, tour the base and get up close and personal with the aircraft. It's an experience you will always remember.

Plus, as a member of the Crew we would like to also give you a members only CareFlight Support Crew T-shirt so you can proudly display your support for our lifesaving work.

Yes, I would like to become a CareFlight Support Crew Member by giving:

\$30 per month \$45 per month \$60 per month

My choice \$ _____ per month

(a minimum \$20 per month to receive the t-shirt)

T-Shirt Size : S M L XL XXL

By:

Option 1: Cheque/money order (Made payable to CareFlight)

Option 2: Direct debit (Monthly donations only. An authorisation form will be sent to you)

Option 3: Credit card

By credit card: MasterCard Visa Amex Diners

Credit card number:

Name on card:

Signature:

Expiry date:

Please return coupon to:

CareFlight

GPO Box 9829 In Your Capital City

www.careflight.org

Toll free: **1800 655 876** Fax: **1300 788 786**

