

GOOD SPORTS

Tips for Making Kids' Recreation Fun & Injury-Free



For Families, Schools & Caregivers

More American children under 5 drown each year than are killed as occupants of motor vehicles. Most of these drownings take place in home swimming pools.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of kids under the age of 15 are treated for bicycle-related injuries. Hundreds die.

These tragedies don't have to happen. Here are a few things you can do to make sure they don't.

Easy Landing: Making Sure Playgrounds Are Safe

Nearly 170,000 kids get hurt while using equipment on public and backyard playgrounds each year. The most common cause of serious injury is falling or jumping to the ground from playground equipment and landing on a hard surface.

The highest rate of injury is among 6- to 8-year-olds, but the number of preschoolers injured on public playground equipment has doubled in the last decade.

Hard paved surfaces are hazardous: falling onto concrete or asphalt from a height of only a few inches can cause a severe head injury. Even natural surfaces—grass and hard-packed earth—can be hazardous.

The most effective way to prevent these injuries is to place a protective, user-friendly surface under and around playground equipment. It's easy to do.

Materials that make a good protective surface include wood chips, mulch, fine gravel and sand. Some materials that are specially designed to absorb energy from falls also are

available for use in playgrounds. The material should cover the fall zone: the area around slides, swings and climbing equipment. It must be deep enough to cushion a child's fall—at least 9 to 12 inches. Surfacing should also be regularly maintained and replenished.

Some communities, as well as the state of California, have set mandatory standards for public playground facilities. You can also check with child safety groups for information and advice.

Making protective surfacing safe is a simple do-it-yourself project that can be part of such community activities as a local clean-up campaign, school improvement program, church fair, even a PTA meeting.

Mulch is easy to use, economical, and readily available at garden centers and through many municipal recycling programs. Donating mulch or wood chips is a good way for civic groups or business organizations to support a community facility.

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Dedicated to the protection of consumers and *prevention* of injury.

AVOID BIKING & SWIMMING HAZARDS

Bicycles

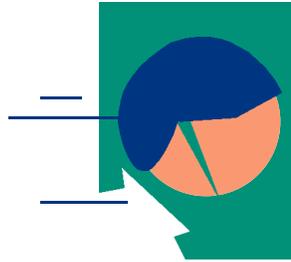
In 1990, about 560,000 bicycle-related injuries were treated in hospital emergency rooms in the United States. Most of them- about 2 out of 3- involved a child under 15.

Head injury is the most frequent cause of serious disability and death in bicycle mishaps. Most hospital admissions and deaths are caused by head trauma- injury to the skull and brain. Among children 14 and under, about one-fifth of all significant brain injuries are bicycle-related.



The economic costs of bicycle-related injuries involving children under 15 were estimated at \$1.2 billion in 1990. The human costs are beyond calculation.

The best way to prevent bike injuries is to wear a helmet.



A recent study shows that using bicycle helmets can reduce head injuries by as much as

85 percent. Sales of helmets have been increasing rapidly-by 25 percent a year in recent years. But fewer than 10 percent of American children use them.

Pools

More than 2,000 children drown each year in this country. In at least 10 states, including California and Florida, drowning has become the leading cause of death among young children.

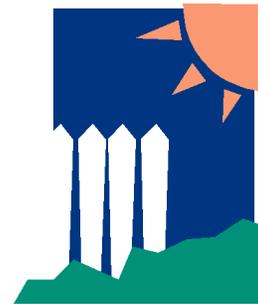
As many as 1 in 5 children who are rescued and survive an incident of near-drowning suffer permanent brain damage.

Toddlers ages 1 to 3 are at highest risk of drowning.

Almost all toddler drownings happen at the child's own home pool, or the pool of a friend, a neighbor or family member.

A residential swimming pool is 14 times as likely as a car to be involved in the death of a child under 5 years old.

Most young children who drown or suffer permanent disability from a near-drowning had adults nearby at the time of the incident.



The most effective way to prevent drowning in residential pools is to install a

locked fence at least 5 feet high that completely surrounds the pool.

GOOD SPORTS

Helmets prevent serious head injury

When should children start to wear bike helmets?

As soon as they're old enough to be on a bike—even as a passenger. In some states, laws require children who are passengers on adult bicycles to wear helmets.

Child helmets are designed for kids from 2 to 6; youth helmets generally fit 6-to-12-year-olds.

The earlier children get used to helmets, the more likely they are to wear them once they're riding on their own.

Families should treat helmets in the same no-nonsense way they do car seats and seat belts: buckle-up every time you ride.

My 6-year-old says that only nerds wear helmets.

In fact, helmets are part of the high-tech look that's fashionable among competitive cyclists these days. They are not at all bulky. Olympic bikers wear sleek, brightly colored helmets that go with the rest of their gear. Football, baseball and hockey players wear helmets as part of their uniforms. So do jockeys and race drivers.

Parents who wear helmets themselves set the best example for their kids.

Aren't helmets hot and uncomfortable?

Helmets now on the market are very lightweight. Many weigh only 8 ounces. Most also come with air vents for cooling. With so many brands and styles available wherever bikes are sold, anyone can find a helmet that fits comfortably.

How can I tell if a helmet meets safety standards?

The helmet should fit snugly atop the head and have a chin strap with buckles that fasten easily and securely.

All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs): Not For Kids.

ATVs are likely to tip or roll over without any prior warning. They are extremely hazardous to young people. More than a third of all ATV-related deaths and injuries involved 3- or 4-wheeled ATVs driven by youths under 16. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission warns against them for kids under 16. Don't be fooled by their appearance: the likelihood of tragedy is just too great.

Helmets with "Snell" and "ANSI" approval meet standards for impact protection and strap strength, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and Consumer Reports.

Since most of these helmets are designed to withstand only one crash, be sure to replace any helmet involved in an accident.

Helmets cost too much just for a piece of plastic foam.

A good helmet generally costs between \$30 and \$40; some models cost more. Compared to the cost of a bicycle, other bike accessories and clothing, this is not an extravagant price. And considered as a vital piece of equipment that can prevent serious injury and even save a child's life, a bike helmet is a bargain.

Reflect on it!

Dawn and dusk are danger times for cyclists on the road. To be visible, children and grown-ups too should have reflectors on the front and rear of the bicycle, the pedals, and the wheels. Clothing, too, should have reflective designs or tape.

Fences prevent swimming pool tragedies

Don't most drownings happen when children are left alone?

At the time of most residential pool drowning and near-drowning incidents, adults are nearby, with a lapse of no more than a very few minutes of attention. In many instances, the drowning happens while the supervising adult thinks the child is indoors.

In the brief time it takes to answer the phone, a child can drown. Irreversible brain damage takes place after only 2 to 5 minutes of immersion. Death can occur within the same few minutes.

Learn CPR

Every adult and older child in a family with a pool should have CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) is an easy-to-learn technique that can save the lives of victims of respiratory and cardiac arrest. CPR training is widely available through local Red Cross and American Heart Association chapters, Y chapters, hospitals, schools and community agencies.

Why do I need to fence the pool?

A fence that surrounds the pool and sets it off from the house and the yard is the only secure way to keep young children out. The fence must be at least 5 feet high and be equipped with self-latching gates. Recent studies suggest that up to 80 percent of childhood drownings would be prevented by this kind of fence.

Can't small children climb over a fence?

Not if it's at least 5 feet high. Since many 3- and 4-year-olds can climb a 4-foot fence, and a lot of 4-year-olds can make it over a 4 1/2-foot fence, a height of 5 feet is a good deterrent. It's also important to keep lawn chairs and tables away from the fence so kids can't use them as climbing aids.

Can a pool cover substitute for a fence?

No. Pool covers provide added protection. But fencing is a must. Even automatic pool covers, which can be costly, are not fool-proof unless they are completely closed when the pool is not used. Pool owners who do have covers must remove water that accumulates on top of a closed cover, because a child can drown in as little as 2 inches of water.

Do swimming lessons help?

About 25% of all young children who drown have had swimming lessons. Children who fall into a pool are likely to panic and forget what they may have learned.

What about above-ground pools?

The same rules apply for an above-ground pool. There is, however, one additional warning—never, under any circumstances, dive into an above-ground pool. They typically are too shallow to be used for diving.

EMERGENCY & HELP NUMBERS

Rescue Squad _____ Doctor _____
Parent Work Phones _____
Neighbor _____ School _____

