

ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL HEALTHSOURCE

Summer Sports Concerns

According to a recent survey by Harris Interactive, nearly 80 percent of Americans are concerned about safety when participating in summer sporting activities. More than 50 percent say they wear safety equipment. Yet according to a recent Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report, emergency department visits, on average, are up 14 percent.

Unfortunately, not enough people wear safety gear, and even if it is used correctly safety equipment does not make sport's participants invincible; emergency departments treat more than 11 million traumatic wounds each year, and experts say that with an increase in sports and outdoor activities during the summer comes an increase in the risk for such injuries.

Serious injuries requiring emergency care can result from a variety of causes, including falls from playground equipment, biking, and contact sports. According to the CDC, one child is injured on the playground every 2½ minutes and emergency department visits by children under the age of 14 increase 18 percent from May through August.

Experts agree that the way to prevent these types of accidents is to "play smart." If safety equipment is available for the sport you are participating in, always wear it, and wear it correctly. If an accident occurs, know your options and seek medical attention quickly. Infections can occur if open lacerations are unattended, even for a short time and scarring is much more likely to occur. Many people put off an emergency department visit for fear of stitches and/or not being able to participate in their favorite sporting activity after treatment.

The way to avoid that is to play safe and smart.



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