

Adventist Healthcare: Health Tip of the Week

Unintentional Injuries

Unintentional injuries rank third in importance behind cancer and heart disease. The most common causes of injuries seen in emergency departments are traffic accidents, falls, and violence. Other causes are poisoning, suffocation, and fires/burns.

Statistics

- * Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death in children, ages one to 21.
 - * Falls are the leading cause of injury death in persons over the age of 65. Childhood falls account for one-third of all fall-related emergency visits each year.
 - * Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death in the U.S. for children and young adults, ages 1 to 24. Every hour, someone dies because they were not wearing a seat belt during an automobile accident. Teens have the lowest rate of seat belt use.
 - * Approximately 4.7 million people each year are bitten by dogs, with 800,000 bites requiring medical attention.
 - * Every year more than 4,000 people drown. Among children ages one to four, most drowning occur in residential swimming pools.
 - * Most residential fires occur during the winter months. Four out of every five fires occur in homes. About 4,000 people die in home fires every year. Cooking is the primary cause; smoking is the leading cause of fire-related deaths.
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- * Every 21 seconds, one person in the U.S. sustains a Traumatic Brain Injury. Research suggests that most of these brain injuries are preventable. Each year, about 315,000 children ages 14 and under are treated for bicycle-related injuries.
 - * More than 10 million sports injuries occur each year. Roughly 3.5 million children, ages 14 and under, are treated for sports-related injuries each year. Research has shown that injury rates may be lowered by as much as 25 percent if proper precautions are taken.

Prevention

- * Visit a physician each year for a physical.
- * Wear a helmet when riding a bike, motorcycle or horse. Also, when playing a contact sport, skiing, snowboarding, or riding an all-terrain vehicle.
- * Warming up before exercise/sport is the best way to reduce the risk of injury. Your cool down should last several minutes and be part of your stretching routine. Don't overdo it. Many injuries are caused by weak muscles.
- * Always wear a seat belt and buckle your child into a safety/booster seat.
- * Teach all children to put toys away when they are finished playing. Children shouldn't have toys they can easily throw or pieces that snap off.
- * Use a step stool and install handrails in your home. Also, use non-slip bathroom mats.
- * Remove tripping hazards such as loose cords.
- * Any dog can be turned into a dangerous dog if treated harshly or trained to attack.
- * Make sure you have smoke alarms and a fire extinguisher in your home.

Sources: American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, CDC, National Safe Kids Foundation, and Washington and Shady Grove Adventist Hospitals. The Health Tip of the Week is for educational purposes only. For additional information, consult your physician. Please feel free to copy and distribute this health resource.