



Safety Smart Kids Stay Out of Emergency Rooms

Summertime is fast approaching, a season of fun and high activity for kids. It is also the most dangerous time of the year for kids, with the majority of injuries for children taking place between May and August, the “trauma season.”

This summer, many children will be seriously injured from motor vehicle crashes, drownings, bike crashes, pedestrian incidents, falls and other hazards. Most will occur in and around the home. Kids will be rushed to our nation’s emergency rooms nearly 3 million times, forecasts National SAFE KIDS.

On an annual basis, children under age fourteen represent the largest number of visitors to hospital emergency rooms in Indiana and across the country:

- Nationwide, injuries to children ages 14 and under account for 234,000 hospitalizations, nearly 8.4 million emergency room visits, and nearly 11.7 million visits to physician’s offices.
- Nationwide, for children ages 14 and under, injury is the leading cause of visits to hospital emergency rooms.
- Nationwide, injury is the leading cause of medical spending for children ages 5 to 14.

In Indiana, Riley Hospital for Children serves as the Hoosier State’s only Level 1 Pediatric Trauma

Center. Riley Hospital has unique capabilities to respond quickly to children statewide and regionally who are critically injured through the Riley Pediatric/Neonatal Transport Team, Lifeline and the new Kiwanis Helipad. This allows rapid aeromedical transport of children to Riley Hospital who require emergency care.

“This summer,” says Dr. L. R. “Tres” Scherer, Director of the Kiwanis-Riley Regional Pediatric Trauma Center, “families can take action to keep kids out of emergency rooms. We save children’s lives every day at Riley Hospital, but consider our most important work accomplished when we prevent children from ever coming here.” “Nine times out of ten, childhood injuries can be prevented.”

Here are 10 things you can do to save a child’s life and keep them out of emergency rooms:

- Use proper fitting and approved helmets and safety gear for recreation and sport activities.
- Supervise children on playgrounds. Maintain appropriate groundcover on playgrounds where your children play to protect children when they fall.
- Lock up all medicines, household, and lawn care products.
- Never start your vehicle until every one of all ages is buckled up properly in a car safety seat or safety belt.
- Inspect your family’s smoke alarm monthly to make certain it is operating. Practice your family’s fire escape plan regularly.
- Use safety locking devices and practice safe storage of firearms and ammunition.
- Require children to wear life vests, or personal flotation devices (PFDs), around any body of water.
- Make certain children have been taught how to swim through an accredited swimming course.
- Install four-sided fencing around swimming pools.
- Practice how and when to call “911” with your child. Have emergency numbers posted near all telephones in your home.

For more information about how to prevent injuries to your child, contact Riley Hospital for Children’s Community Education Department at 317-274-2964 or visit Safety Smart at www.rileyforkids.org