

Safe Sledding (The Thrills Without the Spills)

The thrill of whisking down a steep, snow-covered hill has made sledding a favorite winter past time. However, spills that occur while sledding can be serious. During the winter, many children go to the hospital as a result of sledding accidents.

Here are some simple things you need to know to help your child avoid a sledding accident:

- Never allow children to sled in or near streets or automobile traffic.
- Watch weather conditions closely. Icy conditions mean more speed and greater potential for injury.
- Help your child choose an area that is safe for sledding.
- Make sure the hill or run has no potential to project your child into traffic regardless of the weather conditions.
- Make sure the area is free of obvious hazards such as trees and utility poles. Tree stumps and rocks beneath the snow can also pose a hidden threat.
- Choose a sled that allows for steering. Sleds that lack a steering mechanism and/or a hard surface to ride upon should be avoided.
- To lessen the risk of head injury, children should sled feet first or sitting up. Consider wearing a bike helmet while sledding.
- Never let your child be pulled on a sled by a motorized vehicle. This could result in serious injury or death.
- Dress your child in warm and protective clothing. Heavy duty gloves and boots help protect your child from cuts to his hands and feet. Mittens keep hands warmer than gloves.
- In very cold weather, check for signs of frostbite or hypothermia often. Avoid playing outside for long periods of time when it is very cold.
- **Always supervise your child's sledding.**