

All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) – What Parents Need to Know

Many children are injured while driving or riding an ATV (all-terrain vehicle). The injuries are serious and some children die. Young children don't have the strength or skills needed to operate an ATV. The following information is intended to help you decide if your child should drive an ATV. **The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) makes the following recommendations.***

- Children under the age of 16 should not drive an ATV. Children who are not licensed to drive a car should not drive off-road vehicles.
- ATVs are one person vehicles; don't carry passengers.
- Never use an ATV on a paved road. ATVs are dangerous on any surface when operated by a child; most ATVs were never meant to be driven on streets or highways.
- Do not allow ATV use at night.
- Always wear a helmet, eye protection, and long pants when operating an ATV. Bicycle helmets are not enough protection when riding an ATV. A helmet designed for use on motorcycles is better protection when using an ATV.
- Flags, reflectors, and lights should be used to make it easier to see an ATV.
- Never operate an ATV after drinking alcohol, taking medicines that limit your abilities or make you drowsy.

The rate of serious injuries and deaths to children from ATV use is increasing at an alarming rate. The types of ATV injuries seen in our hospital include broken bones, head injuries, and burns. Please keep your child safe by making smart decisions when considering the use of an ATV.

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