

Preventing ATV Injuries

All terrain vehicles (ATVs) are popular multipurpose vehicles. They can be used for working, recreation and transportation. Parents should be aware that ATVs are dangerous when used by children and youth. Children lack the physical size and strength, as well as the good judgment needed to operate ATVs safely. ATVs can be up to 30 times heavier than a child.

From 1998 to 2002, there were a total of 151 patients treated at the CHEO Emergency Department for injuries related to ATVs. Ten to fourteen year olds represented 55% of patients seen at CHEO for this cause of injury. Males were most often injured. Almost 30% of patients were admitted to the hospital for treatment of their injuries. The most common injuries were fractures and sprains at 50% followed by superficial injuries (abrasions, lacerations, contusions) at 30%. Twelve percent of patients suffered head injuries. Only 43% of patients reported wearing a helmet when their injury occurred.

Parents need to set clear rules with respect to ATV use for their children and youth: The Canadian Paediatric Society recommends:

- Children under the age of 16 should not operate ATVs;
- Children should never ride as passengers;
- ATV users should never carry a passenger unless allowed by the manufacturer;
- Helmets should always be used. Approved helmets and eye protection should fit snugly and always be fastened securely;
- Long pants, gloves, and boots (not sandals) should be worn at all times;
- All drivers should take an approved training course.

For more information visit www.cps.ca

CHEO's Plan-it Safe, and the Eastern Region Injury Network support these recommendations.

Plan-it Safe is CHEO's Injury Prevention Centre for children and youth. The Centre was established in July 1997 to encourage a structured and systematic approach to the prevention of child & adolescent intentional and unintentional injury in and around Eastern Ontario. For more information contact Plan-it Safe, CHEO's Injury Prevention Centre at (613) 738-5899 or www.plan-itsafe.com