

Brian Kendall, M.D. – Summer Injuries and Helmet Safety

Why is summer a busier season for emergency rooms?

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So it's interesting in the summer in the emergency department, we tend to see a lot of the medical illnesses, you know, decrease in volume, but our accidental traumas and injuries tend to go up. And that's for multiple reasons. I think one is kids are out of school. So we're all out playing and having a lot of fun. We go on vacations or a lot of people on the roadways driving, it's warm enough now that we can go to places like the pool, we can get out those vehicles, whether it be an ATV or a golf cart, or motorcycle, the bicycles the scooters, or the motorized things that kids use nowadays, too. And because of the nature of those activities, there's inevitably going to be injuries, but I think there are things that we can do to help prevent those injuries from being serious.

What are the most common injuries you see during the summer?

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Some of the most common things that we'll see over the summer is our motorized vehicle or just bicycle and scooter accidents, especially when people aren't wearing the proper protective equipment. Also water related injuries specifically things like near drownings or drownings and then also heat related injuries. So people becoming overheated, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, those are the things that we typically see more common than not during the summer.

How preventable are these injuries?

1:31

There are some things that you know, even if you're wearing all the protective equipment known to man on a bicycle and you fall off, you can still have an injury. But I think those serious injuries like the head injuries that can be devastating for a person are very preventable by a simple use of wearing a helmet. Same thing with drownings or near drownings, wearing proper life protective equipment, such as a life vest, and having proper supervision while you're in the pool. And then even having proper safety equipment set up around the pool, whether that's a fence or having an appropriate pool cover so that children can't accidentally wander in into a pool.

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The heat part yea for sure, too. I mean, there's so many times that people are outside and they're not drinking enough water. They're not you know, sitting under shade when they can sit under shade. They're not putting on sunscreen. There's all sorts of things that you can do to help prevent yourself from becoming overheated. Taking frequent breaks, if you're outside, working in the heat, all become very simple things that you can do but extremely important to prevent yourself from ending up in the emergency department.

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Why are helmets so important?

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I'm the same way my kids are the same way too. I don't like wearing a helmet. Nobody likes wearing a helmet when they're out riding their bicycle or even riding a motorcycle or a scooter. We all think oh, I can do this safely. I'm not going to crash. I'm not gonna get hit by a vehicle. But that's the biggest thing that we see is the kids and the adults who aren't wearing proper helmets, when they're out doing those activities on either a motorcycle or a scooter or a bicycle. Those head traumas can really be life altering. And deadly. In fact, too, if you know if you're not wearing that I have seen multiple times where parents have saved their children's lives by forcing them to wear a helmet prior to them going out and riding their bike. And those kids come in after being struck by a car or after hitting a curb and flying over the handlebars. And their helmet is completely destroyed. But there's not a scratch on their head. And the kids are just fine and they get to go home. And I've also seen the exact opposite too and it's devastating. And I if I can do anything in this world, it's to make sure that kids and adults are wearing helmets when they're out there doing activities like riding an ATV, riding a motorcycle, riding a bicycle, riding a scooter, all those electric, you know, one wheels and other electric devices that kids are out riding around in the neighborhoods. That's super important to always wear a helmet even if it doesn't look cool.

Does the weight of those vehicles increase the potential for injury?

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Yes, for sure. And I think that's really important too when you're talking about who's operating the vehicle. So especially when it comes to ATVs or dirt bikes, those are typically not made for children. I know that you know there's kids out there who are very responsible can drive those things appropriately. But it's still very important that those are always being operated under adult supervision as you're following all state and federal laws when it comes to operating motorized vehicles. Those rules and laws are in place for everyone's safety. And you don't want to deal with the consequences of having an accident in one of those vehicles because they are heavy and even if you are wearing a helmet, they can still land on you and cause other internal injuries that which can also be devastating.