

Winter Sports Safety



Winter can be a time of great fun. Many families enjoy the weather by skiing, snowboarding, ice skating and sledding. However, these activities can lead to injuries. Following a few safety tips can help you and your family have a fun and safe winter.

Common Sources of Winter Injury

- Winter sports such as skiing, snowboarding, ice skating and sledding can be fun, but dangerous. Falls or crashes can cause cuts and bruises, broken bones, and brain injuries.
- Sleds can reach speeds of 25 miles per hour.
- Frozen bodies of water can have thin patches that can break when someone stands on them. This can lead to falling through the ice.

Getting Ready for Outdoor Fun

- Dress warmly. Wear a winter coat, hat and gloves, and slip-resistant snow boots.
- If skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, ice skating, or sledding, make sure to wear a helmet to prevent a brain injury.
- There are special helmets made for skiing, snowboarding, and snowmobiling. For ice skating or sledding, a multi-sport or bicycle helmet would be a good option if a ski helmet is not available.
- Use knee and elbow pads when ice skating.
- Goggles are important when skiing, snowboarding, or snowmobiling.
- Snowboarders should wear gloves with wrist guards.

Age Recommendations

- **Sledding:** Children younger than 5 should only sled with an adult.
- **Snowboarding:** The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that only children 7 years or older snowboard.
- **Snowmobiling:** The AAP also says that only children 6 years and older should ride on snowmobiles. Children should be 16 years or older to operate a snowmobile.

Winter Safety Tips

- Avoid sledding in areas with trees, fences, ponds, and light poles. Do not sled in or near the street.
- Only one person should ride on a sled, unless an adult is riding with a young child.
- Always sled sitting up and facing forward. Never sled head first.
- Steerable sleds are safer than snow disks or inner tubes.
- Never ride a sled being pulled by a car, ATV, snowmobile, or other motorized vehicle.
- Ice skate in designated skating areas. Never skate on river ice or ice that has thawed and refrozen.