




BC Children's Hospital, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, provides expert care for the province's most seriously ill or injured children, including newborns and adolescents. BC Children's is an academic health centre affiliated with the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, and the Child & Family Research Institute. For more information, please visit www.bcchildrens.ca.

The Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) plans, manages and evaluates selected specialty and province-wide health care services across BC, working with the five geographic health authorities to deliver province-wide solutions that improve the health of British Columbians. For more information, please visit www.phsa.ca.

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Winter sports safety tips from BC Children's Hospital December 2, 2009

Vancouver, B.C. – Winter sports can be a fun way for children and youth to stay active. However, if not enjoyed carefully, these activities can cause serious injuries resulting from falling, slipping, or crashing into other objects or people. It is important for parents to know how common injuries can be prevented.

“At BC Children's, we see a number of kids in Emergency as a result of injuries from winter sports. The most common injuries we treat are related to fractures, concussions, and sprains,” says Dr. Ran Goldman, Medical Director of Emergency at BC Children's Hospital, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority.

Injuries from snowboarding, tobogganing, and downhill skiing are some of the more common causes for visits to BC Children's in the winter months. From 2003 to 2007, BC Children's had approximately 360 visits to the Emergency because of snowboard injuries, 216 visits related to downhill skiing, and 158 visits due to tobogganing.

“Snowboarding is a very popular sport in the winter, but it is also one that can cause injuries like wrist fractures and occasionally more severe injuries,” says Dr. Chris Reilly, Head of Orthopedics at BC Children's Hospital. “Often kids who are learning something new are most at risk for injury if they don't gradually build up their skill level.”

BC Children's has these tips to help children and youth enjoy winter activities safely this winter:

- Kids need to wear the right protective equipment when participating in any winter sport. A properly fitted helmet should be worn at all times. For snowboarding, wrist guards are also a good idea since fractures are the most commonly experienced injury.
- Make sure kids learning a new activity get proper instruction and stay in the ability level of their skills. Ensure kids get enough practice before trying to move on to a more advanced skill level.
- For sports that involve going downhill, make sure kids know how to control their speed and know how to stop properly, especially if they are just learning or have not mastered certain skills.
- When picking a slope for tobogganing, make sure it is free from obstacles like rocks, trees, and fences. Younger children should always be supervised by an adult.
- Know the environment and the surrounding area that kids are going to be in when playing sports. Often, injuries occur when there is no pre-planning of where skiers or snowboarders are going to land.

It is recommended that all parents and caregivers learn first aid to know what to do if a child is injured. More information is available from HealthLink BC at www.healthlinkbc.ca or by calling 8-1-1.

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Note to Editors:

Drs. Ran Goldman and Chris Reilly are available for interviews.