

Newsletter

JANUARY 2008



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Winter Fun or Winter Hazard?

Although, as of the writing of this newsletter it is 66 degrees outside it is winter in Maryland. That means it could snow at any time and whether it stays for a day or for a week you can be sure the kids will want to take advantage of it.

Sledding just may be the quintessential childhood winter activity. What could be more innocent and fun than sliding down a hill on whatever you can get your hands on. That may be why caregivers fail to recognize the dangers that can also be

associated with this simple activity.



The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimated that over 37,000 sledding injuries were treated in emergency rooms across the US in 2005. Although young children are the most at risk of sustaining a sledding related injury, older children and adults make up an estimated 40% of these injuries.

Nevertheless, it is possible to enjoy this traditional winter activity safely by following a few very simple guidelines, as found on the back of this newsletter.

Adult supervision, sledding in an area that is free of obstacles, using proper equipment and being mindful of weather and slope conditions can ensure everyone has a fun and safe experience.

Additional resources

www.cpsc.gov
www.chp.edu/besafe/
www.nsc.org
www.aap.org

Partnership Updates and Upcoming Events

- Dr. James Haan, Associate Professor of Surgery at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, was elected to the position of Chair-Elect for the Partnership. Dr. Haan will serve as Chair-Elect for one year under the guidance of Dr. Soderstrom and in January of 2009 will assume the position of Chairperson.
- The next quarterly meeting of the Partnership will take place on **Tuesday, February 5th**. Please hold this date and check the Partnership website for updates regarding this event.

Guidelines for Safe and Fun Sledding

Children should always be supervised by an adult while sledding!

Before You Go:



- Sledders should wear a helmet.
- Sledders should dress warmly enough for the weather. Thick gloves or mittens and protective boots guard against both the cold and injury.

Where to Sled:

- Never sled on icy hills as sleds cannot be steered or stopped in these conditions.
- Sled on spacious, gently sloping hills which have a level run-off at the end so that the sled can come to a halt safely. Avoid steep slopes and slopes located near streets and roadways.
- Check slopes for bare spots, holes and other obstructions which might cause injury. Bypass these areas or wait until conditions are better.
- Make sure the sledding path does not cross traffic and is free from hazards such as large trees, fences, rocks or telephone poles.
- Do not sled on or around frozen lakes, streams or ponds because the ice may be unstable.



How to Sled:

- The proper position for sledding is to sit or lay on your back on the top of the sled, with your feet pointing downhill. Sledding head first increases the risk of head injury and should be avoided.

Equipment:

- Keep all equipment in good condition. Broken parts, sharp edges, cracks and split wood invite injuries.
- Saucers, inner-tubes and materials whose original intent is not for use as a sled (i.e. cardboard, plastic trays etc.) should not be used as they cannot be steered.

