



Teens + Stay Safe & Avoid Injuries

PATIENT EDUCATION

Make
Smart
decisions



**BE
SAFE & HAVE
FUN!**

BARBARA WOODWARD LIPS
PATIENT EDUCATION CENTER

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The most common reasons ...teens go to emergency centers are:

1. Car and other vehicle crashes.
2. Alcohol and other drugs.
3. Sports injuries or concussions.
4. Accidents involving recreational vehicles, like motorcycles, ATVs, scooters, snowmobiles, and jet skis.



**Most teens think it couldn't happen to them.
But the truth is that every day teens
across the U.S. have traumatic injuries.**

**Read on to learn how you
can avoid a trip to the hospital!**

Be Safe in the Spring

Prom & parties. Not “drinking & dancing.”

This may come as a surprise to you, but drinking and other drugs do not make you dance better. If anything, you lose coordination, not gain some.

Drugs also lower your ability to make good decisions. This increases the chances that you'll take some big risks — like risks related to driving, sexual behavior, swimming or pushing someone into a pool, etc.

And if you're out late for these parties — which you probably will be — add “sleepiness” to the list of things that increase your risk for accidents and bad decisions.



If you really think drugs are “liquid courage,” think again. Looking sloppy, slurring your words and doing things you’ll regret tomorrow are not cool.

Thinking about trying other drugs?

Alcohol, marijuana, prescription meds, ecstasy, inhalants, cocaine, and heroin — all of these drugs really mess up a person's brain. For teens, that's especially bad because the brain isn't finished developing yet.

Are synthetic drugs "less risky" than the real thing?

No! If anyone tells you that, don't be fooled. Synthetic drugs can cause a whole host of bad side effects like paranoia, delusions and seizures. **Sometimes, the "side effects" CAN'T BE REVERSED.**

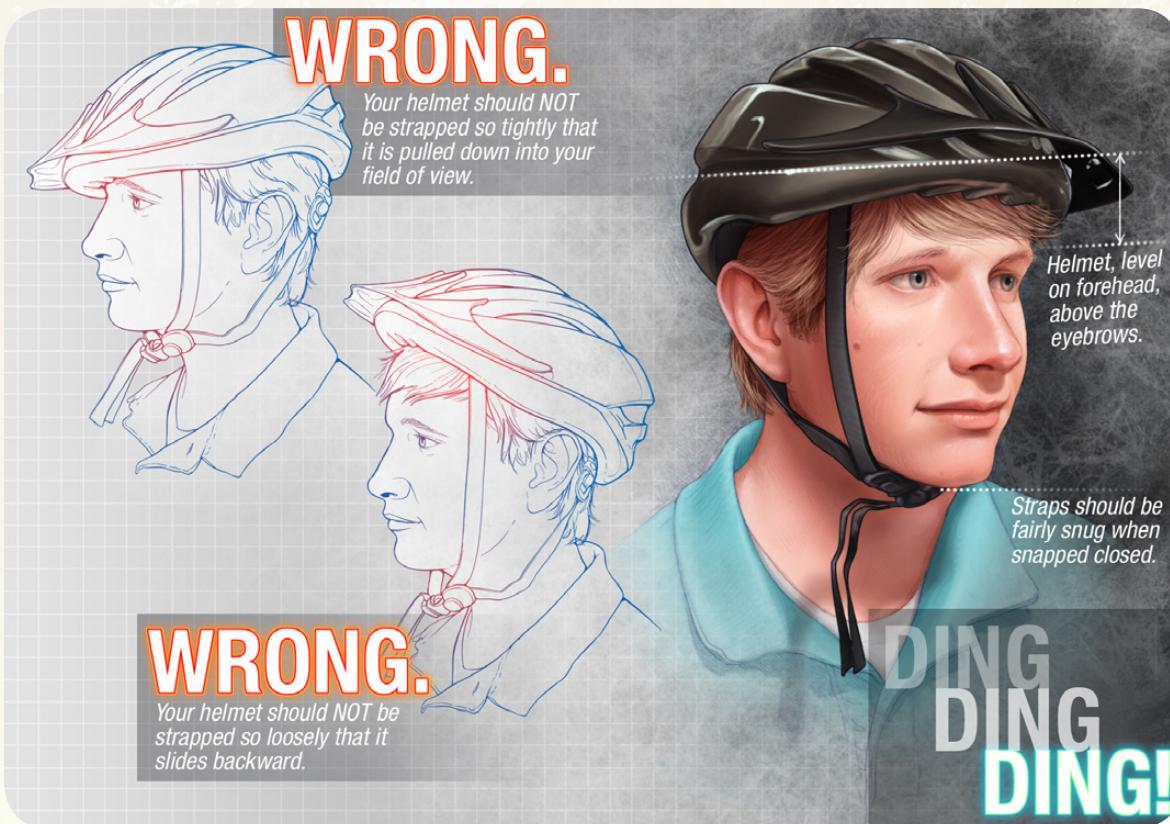


Other springtime fun – recreational vehicles

Motorcycles, ATVs, scooters, snowmobiles, jet skis... A fall from or crash with any type of moving vehicle can easily lead to a lot of injuries. Check around to see who's offering safety courses for your rec vehicle. If they aren't well advertised, ask at the stores that sell the vehicles.

Protect yourself!

Depending on your activity, you may need some safety gear — goggles for your eyes, a helmet and pads for your neck, shoulders, elbows, and chest. Your knees and the front of the lower legs, the shins, may need protection too. Don't forget a mouthpiece and face guard for some of the rougher sports. And if you're a guy, wear a protective cup whenever it's recommended.



Going biking? Your helmet should:

- Be level and low on the forehead, just above your eyebrows.
- Touch all the way around your head. Use sponge pads to fill some space or buy a helmet that fits better, as needed.
- Form a "Y" just below each ear with the front and rear straps.
- Have a snug chinstrap. You should only be able to slide one finger between the strap and chin.

Whatever gear you should wear,
wear it correctly.

It doesn't do a lot of good otherwise, does it?

Walking, jogging & biking

Follow the rules of the road to play it safe...

- Wear a helmet whenever you're riding. It reduces your risk for a head injury by about 85 percent!
- No matter what time of day it is, wear bright-colored clothing and reflectors when you walk, jog or bike. Make sure your bike has lots of reflectors on it.
- Jog and walk AGAINST traffic. When riding a bike, motorized scooter, etc., ride WITH traffic — just as you'd drive a car. (That means you have to obey the traffic signals too!)
- Use your turn signal or hand signals when needed. Be sure to look in all directions before turning. Make eye contact with drivers around you — even though that doesn't mean they'll give you the space you need.
- Stop and look both ways before entering a street. (Yep, that's still one of the golden rules of life.) Use the crosswalk. Stop at all street corners and alley entrances. Don't assume that drivers will stop for you.
- Take care of your bike and vehicle. Check the tires, brakes and seat at least once a year. If you aren't sure how it should work, take it to someone who knows for an inspection.

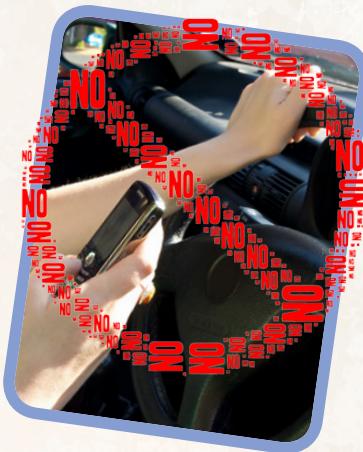


Be Safe in the Summer

The dangers of driving

Sorry, it's true: teen drivers make more driving errors than other drivers. Speeding is often involved, as are these issues...

- **Passengers.** It could be as simple as talking to your friends or as dangerous as following through on a dare. Teens take more risks when they have passengers in the car.
- **Technology increases the risk for distractions.**
 - Texting.
 - Talking on the phone.
 - Finding a new song on the latest gadget — or even on the radio.
- **Nighttime driving** increases the risk for crashes. There are a lot of differences between daytime and nighttime driving.
- **Not wearing a seatbelt** increases the risk for *serious injury or death* caused by a crash.
- **Reckless “fun”** increases your risk for bodily harm too. Hanging out of car windows, cruising on a skateboard while holding onto a moving car, and riding, or “surfing” in the flatbed of a truck or on top of a car or truck — all of these types of “fun” skyrocket your risk for *serious injury or death*.



Having wheels can be very useful.

But it can be dangerous when they aren't used correctly.

Firework warnings

- Only buy and use fireworks that are legal in your state or community.
- Consider using earplugs or other hearing protection around fireworks.
- Don't light fireworks when they are in your hand, then plan to throw it somewhere else.
- Use fireworks far away from anything flammable — like grass and trees, buildings, blankets, chairs, people, and cups, cans or bottles of alcohol.



P.S. Got DEET?

Almost anything you can do outside is more fun when you're not slapping yourself every few seconds. In the spring, summer and fall, don't forget to wear insect repellent. Check with your doctor or www.mayoclinic.com for more information.

Bonfires, grills & burns in the kitchen

- **Fire can jump!** Don't throw or squirt gas, lighter fluid, alcohol, or kerosene onto a fire or into smoke or fumes. Fire can follow the fluid back to your can or cup and cause it to blow up in your hands.
- Stay a few feet away from any fire, including cigarettes and their fumes. Some clothing can melt with a single spark or touch of fire.
- If you are outside, be sure to have a lawn hose hooked up and ready to use when there's a fire going.
- Be careful in the kitchen. Hot liquids, hot food, hot pans, and steam can cause third-degree burns. And the scars could last a lifetime.



Severe weather safety

- Go inside if there is lightning nearby or you hear thunder.
- Standing under a tree is NOT a safe place during a thunder & lightning storm.
- Do not drive during heavy rain.
- Mobile homes are not safe during severe weather. Know where you can go if there's a storm coming, especially if it's a tornado watch or warning!



Take ANY threat of severe weather seriously!



Sunburns do not look “cool”

Many cases of adult skin cancer are believed to have been caused by sunburns people had years earlier, even during childhood.

- Cover your skin with lip balm, sun-block and clothes. Be sure to wear a hat too.
- Stay away from tanning beds. YES! Tanning beds can damage your skin. And, yes, they can give you a “sunburn.” Tanning beds could even lead to skin cancer.
- Protect your eyes too. Sunglasses are smart!



When you're at the pool or the lake, hang out with a friend.

Don't swim alone!

Water safety

- Never dive into water you don't know. Always enter the water feet first.
- Don't swim or do anything in the water if you have been drinking or used illegal drugs. Even some medications can make it dangerous for you to go into the water.
- Never swim in canals or fast-moving water.
- Blow-up pool chairs and water cushions should never be used as life jackets or life preservers.
- If your family enjoys fun in the water, everyone should wear good-fitting life jackets or use life preservers as needed.
- Backyard pools of any type and size are not "safer" than lakes when it comes to the risk of drowning.



Lawn & mowing safety

- Someone else should be at home or nearby when you're working with lawn tools or machinery, including mowing the yard and trimming weeds.
- Other people and pets should not be too close when you are mowing or trimming weeds. Rocks, sticks and other items often fly out when the mower blade or trimmer's line hits them.
- Protect your:
 - Eyes with safety goggles.
 - Hearing with ear plugs or headphones.
 - Feet with tennis shoes or boots.
- Turn any machine OFF before you try to fill it with gas or oil or unclog any part of it.
- Make sure the machine's protective gear works well, such as guards, shields, the grass catcher, and any other safety gear.
- Stay away from hot areas on the mower and other outdoor gear.



Never allow anyone to ride as passengers on ride-on lawn mowers or garden tractors. Each year, many kids are seriously injured or killed using these machines or being near them.



Sports injuries & concussions really do happen.

Football, baseball, hockey, soccer... Some sports have high risks for injuries — especially when balls, pucks and bodies are speeding toward you.

Repeated blows to the head could lead to repeated concussions. Even one big concussion could lead to permanent brain damage, like changes to thinking, reasoning, personality, and intelligence. Worse yet, some kids have died from injuries sustained during a game.

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Be Safe in the Fall

Homecoming, tailgating & other parties...

- Stay away from drinking games. Stumbling and slurring your words aren't funny.
- Drinking and other drugs don't mix well with decision-making or driving.
- If you or your friends are in an unsafe situation, get out. Don't get into a car with anyone who's under the influence. And don't let him or her drive. Grab the keys if you have to!

Gun safety

- Take a class on gun safety if you're going to be around guns for any reason.
- Do not hunt alone!



- If you are of age and have your own gun, keep it unloaded and in a locked place. Don't keep bullets in the same place as the gun.

Be Safe on the Farm

Farming can be an incredibly rewarding job. It can also be very dangerous some days. Use these tips to help you be safe on the farm.

- If you haven't been properly trained to use the equipment, ask for directions. Don't use anything that you're not trained to use.
- If you have to work on the farm alone, be sure you have your cell phone ON YOU — not sitting somewhere else. If something happens, you need to be able to call for help.
- Keep all guards, shields and safety devices on the machinery. No exceptions.
- Be really careful near and on tractors, combines, lawn mowers, and ATVs. Many accidents happen by falling into equipment. And it's really easy to get thrown from one of these machines. Even a fall from a machine that's turned off could cause a head injury!
- Remember to:
 - Keep your clothes AND HAIR away from moving machine parts, such as PTO shafts, gears and belts.
 - Never ride on a grain wagon or go into a silo or grain bin. It's easy to get trapped by flowing grain. Closed storage areas could fill in seconds and suffocate you.
 - Never let anyone ride in the open bed of a pick-up truck.



Farm animals

If you don't live on a farm, when you visit one be sure to ask what you should do and not do. Some key tips are listed here.

- Always walk toward an animal from the front, so they can see what you're doing.
- Be calm, be quiet and move slowly.
- Specifically, don't do anything that would startle, scare or make farm animals angry.

Be Safe in the Winter

The faster you go, the higher your risk for injuries is!

Most snow collisions are with fixed objects, such as trees, or with other people. So travel on marked trails or routes that you know well. Many teens have been seriously injured traveling across what they thought was an open field.

- **Never, ever do outdoor activities alone.**
- **Always wear a helmet.** Head injuries are some of the most common injuries from high-speed winter sports, including sledding. It may not be illegal to ski or snowboard without a helmet where you live, but these activities are just as risky as riding a motorcycle. Learn about the benefits and limitations of helmets sold today.
- Wear sunglasses or other eye protection — even on cloudy days. Yes, this will save you some wrinkles in the future. More importantly, it could help you avoid damage to your eyes.



Sledding

- Only sled on land that you know well. Rocks, trees, bushes, and other stuff could land you in a pile of hurt!
- Make sure the bottom of the hill, or slope, is away from streets and traffic.
- Use sleds that can be steered. Do not use homemade sleds.
- Do not sled downhill when you're facing head-first, lying on your stomach. This position increases your risk for serious head and abdomen injuries. Sit up and face forward. Please.
- Never allow anyone to ride in a sled pulled by a motorized vehicle.



Have you ever wondered why the pros wear helmets?

Probably not.

You know why.

They want to live to play this sport another year! All it takes is one injury and that could end your days of fun, forever.

Don't forget your eyes too. You could permanently damage your retinas with over-exposure to the glaring sun on snow. Even if you squint.



Your skin is your largest organ. Give it some love!

- Dress for the weather. You won't look nearly as stylish with frost on your skin.
- If you feel numbness or pain in the fingers, toes, nose, cheeks or ears after playing outdoors, it may be frostbite. Frostbite is also a risk if the skin is blistered, sensitive to touch or looks shiny or glossy. If you think you may have frostbite, get medical care ASAP. Do not put the area back in the snow or on ice!

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Snow skiing, snowmobiling and snowboarding

- Take at least one or two skiing lessons before you start to ski. You'll be safer and look cooler this way.
- Test your ski-boot bindings. The release properties should be tested each year in a certified shop. Every day you ski you should test the bindings by kicking out of them. Bindings should be no more than 3 to 4 years old. Some of the material used in the bindings breaks down over time. This can't be seen by looking at the bindings.
- Do not wrap the ski-pole straps around your wrists or hands.
- Only ski if you feel in control. Be careful when you get on and off a ski lift.
- Watch out for other people on the slopes. Newbie skiers may not be able to stop if they get too close to you. Sort of like driving a car, you have to know that you can get out of the way when you need to!



For every choice
you need to
make, there are
positive and
negative
consequences.

You have the
POWER
to make
safe choices —
choices that can
decrease or *eliminate*
your risk
for negative
consequences!

The Recap

The faster you go, the higher your risk for injuries is!

Your teen years could be some of the most exciting years of your life. And, exciting activities often have risks. To avoid the risks and keep the fun coming, remember these tips:

- Be safe and be a good role-model for your friends and any brothers or sisters you have.
- Drive carefully.
- Don't drink or use other drugs, not even the synthetic ones.
- Use the right protective gear for your activities.
- Be really careful around all fires, animals, water, cars, and snow.
- Take care of your skin and body. If you want them to last for years, give them some love along the way!



Speaking of Being Healthy

This material shares a lot about the things to DO and NOT TO DO if you want to avoid a traumatic injury.

There are 4 more to-dos that could make a big difference in your life every day...

- **Get enough sleep.** Most teens need about 9-1/2 hours ideally. Yes, seriously. Your brain will work better and you'll make better decisions when you get good sleep.
- **Eat well** — good, healthy foods. Usually three meals per day with two good snacks to fuel the growth spurts you're still having.
- **Stay hydrated.** Water is really good for your brain, your muscles and all your other parts too!
- **Get enough exercise.** If you're not in a sport at school or in a rec league, it's important to get some "exercise." This doesn't have to involve a gym membership and jumping jacks. You could rake the yard, walk around the track at school or in the neighborhood, shovel the sidewalks, or clean the garage. It all counts toward keeping your body healthy!



for More Information

The web can be a great place to find information. The two sites listed here have really good information.

Unfortunately, not all of the info you find on the web is reliable or accurate. Mayo Clinic does not sponsor or endorse these websites. So the clinic can't guarantee their accuracy.

You can always ask your doctor if you have any questions.

- www.sadd.org, Students Against Destructive Decisions
- www.noys.org, a website of the National Organization for Youth Safety — a group of more than 70 national youth organizations

BARBARA WOODWARD LIPS PATIENT EDUCATION CENTER

Mrs. Lips, a resident of San Antonio, Texas, was a loyal Mayo Clinic patient of more than 40 years and a self-made business leader who significantly expanded her family's activities in oil, gas and ranching. Upon her death in 1995, Mrs. Lips paid the ultimate compliment by leaving her entire estate to Mayo Clinic. By naming the Barbara Woodward Lips Patient Education Center, Mayo honors her generosity, her love of learning, her belief in patient empowerment and her dedication to high-quality care.

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