

Doernbecher offers safe sledding tips

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Doernbecher Children's Safety Center aims to reduce injuries in children through education and distribution of safety products; it is free and open to the public

Each year thousands of people are injured sledding in city parks, on streets and in resort areas, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. In the wake of yesterday's snowstorm, Oregon Health & Science University Emergency Department treated a rash of sledding accident victims - eight total, some severe. To help families be safe while having fun, Doernbecher Children's Safety Center, Doernbecher Children's Hospital, recommends the following:*

- The minimum recommended age for sledding is 2.*
- Adults should ride with children 5 and younger.*
- Supervise children while sledding.*
- Sled in a safe area with a gentle slope that is clear of obstacles. The sledding path should not end in a street, parking lot or body of water.*
- Sledding should be done during the day or on well-lit hills.*
- Children should wear a properly fitted helmet while sledding. Snow and ski helmets provide the best protection.*
- Never go downhill headfirst. Sit facing forward and steer.*
- Be sure children wear layers of clothing to stay warm and dry with water- and wind-resistant outerwear.*
- Be sure that sledding equipment is sturdy and safely constructed.*
- Never ride in a sled that is being pulled by a motorized vehicle.*
- Use a sled with runners and a steering mechanism, which is safer than toboggans, snow disks, or plastic sheets, which can be pierced."Although sledding injuries occur in people of all ages, the majority happen in children aged 14 and younger, especially at the end of the sledding path. Some of the injuries can be serious enough to cause lifelong disability or death. Wearing a helmet helps prevent head injuries; they should always be worn," said Dana Hargunani, M.D., director, Doernbecher Children's Safety Center, and assistant professor of pediatrics, OHSU School of Medicine.

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