



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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ADPH offers safety tips for the school year

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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As the 2011-2012 school year gets underway, parents and students alike need to remember safety. Three areas of increasing concern are traffic injuries, sports injuries and falls.

According to recent reports by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, every hour 150 children between birth and age 19 are treated in emergency departments for injuries sustained in motor vehicle crashes. More than half of the 7 million sports and recreation-related injuries that occur each year are sustained by youth between ages 5 and 24. Falls are the leading cause of non-fatal injuries for all children ages 0 to 19.

The Alabama Department of Public Health asks parents to take these suggested precautions to ensure a safe school year.

Car Passenger Safety

- All car occupants should be safely secured in a seatbelt or with a child safety seat.
- All children ages 12 and under should be seated in the back seat of vehicles.
- Be sure to follow all requirements of Alabama's Graduated Driver License (GDL) program.

School Bus Safety

- While waiting for the bus, children should take five giant steps back from the curb until the bus has stopped completely.
- Remind children to stay seated at all times and keep head, arms and hands inside the bus.
- Be careful that clothing, book bags and key rings don't get caught in the handrails or doors.
- When getting off the bus, children should walk to the closest sidewalk or side of the road and take five giant steps away from the bus.

- If something is dropped near the bus, the bus driver should be alerted so that the child can be seen when picking up the dropped item.

Preventing Football-related Injuries

- Enroll children in organized teams through schools, community clubs and recreation areas that are properly maintained and committed to injury prevention.
- Ensure child athletes are hydrated with water or sports drinks and appropriately dressed to prevent heat-related injuries or illness.
- Make sure football players understand the rules related to injury prevention and learn to block and tackle without using the head.
- If a player is injured, get medical guidance before returning to practice or play.

Preventing Injuries in All Sports

- Children should wear protective gear when playing ALL sports. Gear should include mouth and wrist guards, knee and elbow pads, and a helmet when skating or biking.
- Sports protective equipment should be correctly maintained and in good condition.

Falls

- Check to make sure that the playground equipment your child uses is properly designed and maintained and that there is a safe, soft landing surface below.
- Use home safety devices, such as guards on windows, stair gates and guard rails.
- Children should wear bike helmets any time they are on a bicycle.

For more injury prevention information visit: www.cdc.gov and www.adph.org/injuryprevention