



CAPE COD SPORTS MEDICINE INC.

ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON

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SLEDDING INJURIES

Sledding injuries account for a large number of injuries seen in community Emergency Depts. Every winter. Consider this:

- 326,000 sledding injuries were seen between 1991-1998 in Emergency Departments
- 2.8 BILLION dollars was spent on Health Care for sledding injuries.
- In a single year (1995) 54,727 sledding injuries occurred at a cost of 365 million \$\$.
- 50% of sledding injuries involve the extremities.
- 17% involve spinal injuries
- 15% of injuries involved the head
- 11% of all sledding injuries are FATAL



Most sledding injuries involve children less than 14 years old. Head injuries are more likely in the younger age group, as the neck muscles in children less than 6 years old are weaker, their head is proportionately bigger, and their bodies have a higher center of gravity.

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) and the U.S. Forest Service recently released their guidelines for safe sledding. They are:

- Sled only in designated areas clear of fixed obstacles such as trees, fence posts and boulders.
- Children should be supervised by an adult. There should be adult supervision at the **BOTTOM** of the sledding area to prevent collisions or going off the trails.
- Children younger than 12 should wear a **protective helmet**. If a bicycle helmet is worn, a knit cap should be worn under it to preserve body heat.
- All sledders should avoid sledding in a head first position. Instead, the sledder should sit upright and steer with his feet.
- Avoid sledding on plastic sheets, since they can be pierced by sharp objects and cannot be steered. Sleds with runners are safer than toboggans or saucers which have no steering mechanism.



You may obtain copies of the AAOS sledding safety brochure, free of charge by calling (800)824-BONES or sending a self-addressed stamped business envelope to "Sledding", AAOS, PO Box 1998, Des Plaines, IL 60017