



Injury Prevention Strategies

What can child advocates do?

Promote helmet use by all equestrians

- Head injuries are the leading cause of horse-related deaths. Promote helmet use by equestrians through clubs, organizations and communities.

State Maternal and Child Health agency and/or health department injury specialist staff should interact with staff of public and private agencies responsible for youth equestrian activities to discuss methods to:

- Reduce horse-related injury risks to youth.
- Evaluate efficacy of current safety programs and policies.
- Encourage policies that insure safe practices in group situations such as stables, camps, and outfitters.
- Work with insurance industry to reduce liability and maximize safety.
- Promote equipment manufacturing standards that address safe youth participation.
- Provide resources to local communities to approach childhood injury prevention appropriate to needs of local populations.
- Consider creating an equestrian helmet safety display for loan to communities.

Promote cooperation among local public health agencies, riding clubs, 4-H projects, medical and emergency medical service providers, and others interested in youth safety

- Consider working together on a local helmet campaign to increase access that could include discounts and other incentives.
- Establish and maintain a trauma system that is responsive to the needs of injured children and the off-road nature of the sport.
- Consider developing a position statement on horses and children based on the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) statement.

Child safety advocates and parents who ride should be especially vigilant about the following practices:

- Wear a SEI certified, ASTM standard helmet when riding or working around horses.
- Before riding, inspect all equipment for wear and stretching and be sure it is all securely fastened.
- Encourage parents to choose a mount for their child that matches their ability level.
- Provide children with appropriate supervision and participation in an approved training program by an experienced instructor who has completed an accredited horse-safety course.
- Wear footwear that has a distinct heel and completely covers the ankle.
- Never tie yourself to a horse with a lead rope or reins.
- Leave the stirrup bar in a horizontal position, when possible, to detach if being dragged.
- Use safety stirrup irons to prevent dragging if a foot slips through the stirrup.

The magnitude and distribution of equestrian-related morbidity, disability, and behavior risk factors should be routinely monitored through public health surveillance systems

- E-codes contain several classifications for animal-induced injuries. Currently none exist for horses.
- Promote collection of statewide data that includes type of injury, helmet use, time of day, surface conditions, location, adult supervision, level of training and experience of rider.

Many people consider health care providers credible role models and a reliable source of information

- Incorporate injury prevention counseling into routine health care.
- If you ride, role model the proper safety precautions.
- Take the opportunity to offer the facts on injury to your club, a local 4-H club, state organization, or media.

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