



FALL 2007

Injury Connection Newsletter



Focus on Children and Youth

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Injury Connection Newsletter

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Back to School - Pedestrian Safety

Children who are under the age of nine often have not developed the skills necessary to cross the street safely by themselves. Their sight, hearing, height, perception and mental development are not the same as adults and this decreases their ability to make safe judgments about traffic. From an early age, children need to be taught how to cross a street safely through repetitive practice and encouragement. A child under the age of nine should be accompanied by an adult or older children whenever he or she crosses the street.

There are many ways in which a child processes the information needed to cross the street safely differently than an adult including:

- Mental development - A child tends to focus on only one thing at a time and only on those things that are interesting to him. Even if a child has been taught the correct way to cross a street, he may have difficulty processing all the pieces of information that are needed to do that safely.
- Height - Most children under nine years of age are less than four feet tall. A child may not be able to see over and around obstacles such as parked cars, shrubs or trees to spot oncoming traffic and these obstacles may cause the drivers to be unable to see her.
- Sight - A child's peripheral vision is approximately only 1/3 that of an adult's. This limitation

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Dog Bites are Preventable

While the number of deaths due to dog attacks in Canada is in the 12-15 range per year, there are nearly 500,000 reports of biting incidents with approximately 60% involving children. One in two children will be bitten by a dog by the time they are 12. Most of the bites occur to the head, face and neck and statistically, boys are bitten more often than girls.

To prevent dog bites, we need to understand what motivates the dog to bite and then reduce risk through modification of both human and dog behavior.

Public Education is the key – people can change their behavior around dogs by:

- Teaching children how to interact

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Demonstration of how to
Be-a-Tree



Dogs do not like hugs and kisses, as shown by the forlorn look on the dog's face plus the pre-eminent bite warning sign of seeing the half moon shape of the whites of a dog's eye.

Doggone Safe has a kit with photos like this to assist in teaching children about warning signs and proper behaviour around dogs.

Dog Bites. . .continued from page 1

- safely with dogs (Be-a-Tree & A,B, Cs)
 - Teaching adults that children and dogs **should not be left unsupervised**
 - Teaching dog owners the importance of selection of appropriate breed of dog for the family, the importance of dog obedience training (who is “top dog” in the household) and of spaying and/or neutering their dog. Approximately 70% of fatal dog attacks are from intact (non-neutered) male dogs. Dogs should not be tied up on a regular basis as this may create one of the greatest risks as it increases a dog’s aggressiveness
 - Teaching dog owners and others how to recognize when interaction with the dog is not safe (the **dog’s body language** gives “warning signs”)
- with Doggone Safe (a non-profit organization in Ontario www.doggonesafe.com) is promoting a dog bite prevention program. This includes teaching children and the adults who care for them the following information:
 - Dogs do not like hugs and kisses. They interpret this as very aggressive behavior
 - Be-a-Tree: stop, fold in your branches (hands & arms), and watch your roots grow (feet). Assume this position if a dog approaches you and likely it will sniff you and go away
 - A, B,Cs if you want to approach a dog:
 - A. Ask permission from owner (adult, parent)
 - B. **Be-a-Tree** or Be sniffed (with closed lowered fist)
 - C. Coochie-coo the dog under its chin (dogs do not like being patted on the head)

Dogs bite because someone failed to recognize the warning signs.

The Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association in collaboration

Health Canada Considering Ban

Health Canada has completed a consultation on their proposal for legislative action on infant bath seats and bath rings. Health Canada’s Consumer Products Safety Bureau is testing the safety of the products, with results expected in the spring. A decision on whether to ban the devices is expected shortly thereafter.

Infant bath seats and bath rings are products designed to support infants in an upright position in the bathtub, and usually consist of a plastic seat or

ring. Suction cups are often employed to hold the product into place; however, newer models use an arm that attaches to the side of the bath tub instead.

The expected age range for the use of these products is from six to nine months, representing the time frame in which an infant can sit unassisted, until the time when they can pull themselves to a standing position. Since 1991, Health Canada has

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Research News

A study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health looked at the magnitude, the national trends, and mortality and hospitalization due to injuries among Canadian adolescents aged 15-19 years in 1979-2003. The authors, Pan et al., found that in youth 15-19 years of age, 75.6% of all deaths and 16.6% of all hospitalizations were attributed to injuries.

Unintentional and self-inflicted injuries accounted for 70.2% and 24.1%, respectively, of the total injury deaths. They also account for 72.6% and 17.4%, respectively, of total injury hospitalizations.

During the time period of 1979-2003, mortality and hospitalization rates of total and unintentional injuries decreased substantially. However, the rates for self-inflicted injuries decreased only slightly, with

a small increase in females. Rates also decreased for all causes except suffocation, which showed an increasing trend.

Males had higher rates for all intents and causes than females, except for self-inflicted injury hospitalizations.

The study concluded while injury is the leading cause of deaths and a major source of hospitalizations, prevention programs in Canada have made significant progress in reducing injury mortality and hospitalization.

Source: Adolescent Injury Deaths and Hospitalization in Canada: Magnitude and Temporal Trends (1979-2003)
Pan S, Desmeules M, Morison H, Semenciw R, Ugnat A, Thompson W, and Mao Y. Journal of Adolescent Health. 2007;41:84-92

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means that it is very important for a child to turn his head, and look left and right when performing a search for traffic.

- Hearing - A child finds it difficult to tell if the sound she hears is coming from the right or the left and may look the wrong way when trying to find the location of the sound. She may also have difficulty in recognizing the sound of a vehicle and will often be unaware that it is moving towards her.
- Perception - children have difficulty in judging speed of vehicles, how far away a vehicle is and what is a safe distance is

between vehicles in which to cross. Children may not understand that a vehicle could hit them causing serious injury or death.

Children take years to grow and develop. They are not just "little adults". Children under nine years of age must be properly supervised by an adult or older child when crossing the road. When a child who is nine years old can demonstrate the proper techniques for crossing the street safely, he may begin to cross unsupervised.

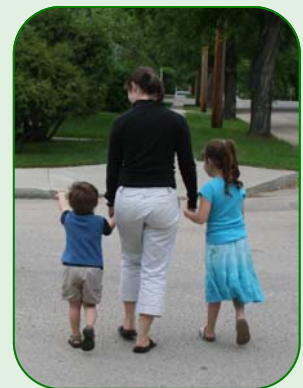
Source: Saskatchewan Prevention Institute's Pedestrian Safety fact sheet.



Did you Know?

Motor vehicle-related injuries to child and youth pedestrians in Saskatchewan between 1996-1999 were:

- 26 deaths and 314 hospitalizations
- 30% of the 314 hospitalizations were to children 5 to 9 years old (highest incidence)
- 25% of the 314 hospitalizations were to children 1 to 4 years old (second highest incidence)



Health Canada Considering Ban. . .continued from page 2

received 11 reports of drowning deaths linked to these products with nine occurring within the last 7 years. Additionally, 20 near-drowning incidents have been reported since 1983.

In most cases, drownings and other incidents linked to bath seats and bath rings occur as a result of:

- the product becoming unstable and tipping over in the bath,
- the infant climbing out of the product, or
- the infant slipping through one of the leg openings and becoming lodged underwater.

Some models of infant bath seats and bath rings carry warning labels that state “prevent drowning - never leave child unattended” while other models bear a warning that states “prevent drowning - always keep baby within arm’s reach.” Despite these warnings, in most reported incidents, the infant had been left unattended or under inadequate supervision. Health Canada is concerned that parents and caregivers presume the infant is secure in the product and can leave the child unattended.

Source: Health Canada

New Weight Limits for Car Seats

An Interim Order has been issued by Transport Canada that amends the definition of “child” to mean a person whose weight is not less than 9 kg (20 lbs) and not more than 30 kg (65 lbs). Since a “child restraint system” is a device that is designed to restrain a “child”, the Interim Order effectively **raises the maximum weight use limit for child restraint systems from 22 kg**

(48 lbs) to 30 kg (65 lbs).

Manufacturers are now able to bring forward facing seats with a weight limit of 30 kg (65 lbs) to Canada. The Sunshine Radian is already available with this higher weight limit.

This change will allow children to remain in a forward facing seat with a harness for a longer period of time.

New and Related Resources

Pedestrian Safety Fact Sheet: This fact sheet provides information on statistics regarding pedestrian safety in Saskatchewan, reasons why a child is not able to cross a street safely by themselves until age nine and the method to teach a child how to cross safely. The fact sheet is available only online at www.preventioninstitute.sk.ca.

Is Your Child Safe? This booklet, from Health Canada, covers many topics regarding child safety. The booklet can be ordered by calling (306) 975-4502 or emailing Sk_Prodsafe@hc-sc.gc.ca or through the Prevention Institute.

Forward Facing Car Seat Fact Sheet: Provides information to parents on how to use a forward facing car seat correctly and when to move their child to a booster.

These resources can be ordered from the Prevention Institute or downloaded from the website.
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Upcoming Events

International Walk to School Month

October
Website:
www.goforgreen.ca

Prevention Matters Conference

October 22-24, 2007
Website:
www.preventioninstitute.sk.ca

Canadian Injury and Safety Promotion Conference “Evidence, Action, Violence, and Suicide in Canada”

November 11-13, 2007
Toronto, Ontario
Website:
<http://207.35.157.99/natconf/index.html>

9th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion

March 15-18, 2008
Merida, Yucatan, Mexico
Website:
www.safety2008mx.info

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