

# Keeping Outdoor Playtime Fun: Avoiding Toy-Related Injuries

Written by Karah Van Kammen

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By Penny Bowen, M.D., EVDI Medical Imaging



With the Arizona springtime on the horizon, more and more kids are taking their playtime outside. Everywhere you look kids are riding their bicycles, scooters or skateboards and enjoying the beautiful weather. Unfortunately, this is also prime time for falls, tumbles and slips. Did you know toy-related injuries are on the rise, and ride-on toys result in the highest number of toy-related injuries among kids?

According to a recent study by the Clinical Pediatrics, ER visits resulting from toy-related injuries increased 40 percent from 1990 to 2011. Ride-on toys accounted for 35 percent of visits and 43 percent of hospital admissions, and the most frequent injury types were broken bones and dislocations.

These figures may seem scary, but luckily there are precautions that parents can take to encourage safety. The following are easy tips parents can take to keep playtime fun.

**Safety gear first.** Falls are inevitable with ride-on toys, but properly fitting helmets and pads can go a long way to keeping your kids safe from injuries. If you are worried about your kids wearing them consistently, try gifting the gear with a bicycle, skateboard or scooter to create a positive association from the beginning.

**Fits just right.** Injuries are common on ride-on toys when the bicycle, skateboard or scooter is not an appropriate size for your child. Little ones are more focused on operating the toy properly rather than paying attention to their surroundings. When picking out a mobile toy for your child, be sure it is the appropriate size and style for their height and weight.

**Riding in numbers.** Teach your kids safe riding habits with family rides. Teach them hand signals, eye contact with car drivers, safe routes and where to ride when close to a road. This helps instill good habits early on, keeping kids riding safely when they are older.

While these tips may seem simple, they can go a long way in keeping little ones safe from preventable injuries. Following these recommendations makes outdoor playtime more fun for the whole family and prevents trips to the ER.

*Penny Bowen, M.D. is a musculoskeletal radiologist at EVDI Medical Imaging, the leading diagnostic imaging services across the greater East Valley region.*

