

IMPACT ON INJURIES

Manitoba's Injury Prevention Newsletter

July/August 2006

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• AAP Policy recommendations for Skateboards

The American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Injury and Poison Prevention recommends in their [policy statement on skateboards](#)

- "Children younger than 10 years should not use skateboards without close supervision by an adult or responsible adolescent. Children younger than 5 years should not use skateboards; instead, parents and pediatricians should encourage them to undertake activities that are more developmentally appropriate."
- "All skateboarders wear a *helmet* and other *protective gear* (including wrist guards, elbow pads, and knee pads) to prevent or reduce the severity of injuries resulting from falls. The helmet should be a bicycle helmet that complies (and is so labeled) with the CPSC standard or a multisport helmet that complies with the N-94 standard established by the Snell Memorial Foundation (requires that helmets pass multiple impact tests to the back during laboratory testing)."

"Communities should continue to develop skateboarding parks and encourage youth to practice there. These parks are preferred to home-constructed ramps and jumps, because they are more likely to be monitored for safety and separate the skateboarder from pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic. Existing guidelines for such parks should be standardized."

• Points of IMPACT: Staying Safe on Skateboards

Skateboarding, the new skateboard facility and the controversy regarding mandatory helmets for skateboarders have received much media attention since the opening of the skateboard park at the Forks, Winnipeg. I would like to stress the importance of using safety equipment while skateboarding, at skateparks and elsewhere in the community, indoors and outdoors.

Skateboarding has become increasingly popular over the past decade among young males. Children's Hospital has seen an increasing number of skateboard-related injuries. From 1997-2003, the number of Emergency Department visits for skateboarding injuries has increased from 16 to 109 per year. Injuries are most often from falls onto concrete surfaces, and 10-14 year old youths have the most ED visits. Fractures are the most common injuries, and concussions occur in 2% of cases. Almost 10% of these injuries led to hospital admission and others required day surgery. Only 16% of children and adolescents were reported to have worn helmets when injured.

IMPACT has been asked if the number of skateboard related injuries has increased since the opening of the Forks skateboard park. While the data system does not allow us to retrieve that information, we do know that two serious head injuries requiring emergency neurosurgical care have already occurred. Typically, there is one serious skateboard-related head injury every summer.

Injury prevention experts, including IMPACT, are in favour of all people engaging in active, healthy lifestyles. This is key to good health and preventing obesity and related health problems in later life. However, injuries can interfere with sports participation and other activities. Head injuries can range from concussions to more serious head injuries, with long-term cognitive and behavioural problems, physical mobility problems, and even death. Fractures can require operations under general anesthesia, and months of casting and rehabilitation. Using helmets and wrist guards can significantly reduce the risk of some of the most serious of these injuries.

Skateboarders, please enjoy your whole summer. Protect yourself by wearing a helmet and wrist guards, and skate within your own limits.

Lynne Warda, MD, FRCPC
Medical Director, IMPACT

• Child & Youth Unintentional Injury: 10 years in review

A new report released by Safe Kids Canada, looks at the changes in death and hospitalization trends for childhood injury over from 1994-2003. Results show that the overall death rates for childhood injury have dropped by 37% and hospitalization rates by 34%. The report highlights areas that have shown significant improvement, and also illustrates injury causes that need increased attention.

This report focuses on unintentional injuries to children from birth to 14 years of age. It notes that although Canada has seen a reduction in death rates, unintentional injury remains the leading cause of death for children from 1-14 years.

The report cites that Manitoba has seen a 42% reduction in the hospitalization rate.

The report has a section on each topic and lists statistics, and preventive action for:

- Child passenger safety
- Drowning
- Threats to breathing
- Burns
- Bicycles
- Pedestrian
- Poisoning
- Falls
- Playgrounds
- ATVs and Snowmobiles
- School bus
- Scooters, skateboards and in-line skates

For a copy of Child & Youth Unintentional Injury: 10 years in Review, call Safe Kids at 1-888-SAFE-TIPS or go to : www.sickkids.ca/SKCFForPartners/custom/SKW06NationalReportENG.pdf

• Healthy Kids Healthy Futures: Year One

It has been one whole year since the Healthy Kids Healthy Futures All Party Task Force released its report and recommendations. Since then, Manitoba Healthy Living has been working diligently to take action to improve the healthy and safety of children in our province. In response to Task Force recommendations, injury prevention activities have been undertaken in three main focus areas: bike safety, drowning prevention and making farms safer for children.

Bike Safety: Helmet campaign and Protect your Noggin ads

To help protect cyclists from wheeled sport, in particular bicycle, related head injury, Manitoba Healthy Living is promoting the use of helmets through their 'Protect your noggin' public awareness campaign, which includes paid TV, bus shelter and radio advertising and public service announcements. A special promotion that offered good quality, low cost helmets to all students and daycares in Manitoba saw some 18,500 helmets purchased by families all across the province. As well, 1000 helmets were given to Kidsport for distribution to children who are unable to afford a helmet. This means that 19,000 cyclists will be safer this summer as they enjoy wearing their new helmets.

Drowning Prevention: PFD Loaner Program

Northern and remote communities can make their waters safer for boaters and swimmers by organizing a community-based pfd loaner program. Manitoba Healthy Living has funded The Manitoba Coalition for Safer Waters to operate the program which will make a supply of 20-30 personal floatation devices (PFDs) for child, youth and adults available for up to 50 communities that organize a system for loaning these life-saving devices to residents. For more information, see the *PFD Loaner Program: A Guide for Communities* at www.hsc.mb.ca/impact/s_w_index.htm

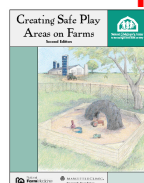
Farm Safety: Creating Safe Play Areas on Farms

Manitoba Healthy Living is investing \$50,000 in a new grant program to help farm families create safe play areas for children. The Safe Play Area Grant will provide grant of up to \$500 to help qualifying farm families create secure and enclosed play areas for their children. The grants are available for family farms with at least one child under 10 years of ages. To qualify, farm families must provide a detailed plan and a budget for their play area. The grant application deadline is July 31st. Additional information and requests for applications are available at www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/farmsafety.html.

The Healthy Kids Healthy Futures Task Force examined issues of nutrition, physical activity and injury prevention and identified priorities, initiatives and actions. Recommendations of the Task Force report covered 10 key areas: educational health promotion initiatives, nutrition in schools, physical activity in schools, recreation facilities and access, recreation leadership, active transportation, injury prevention, low-income families, First Nations communities, and mental health and wellness. The Healthy Kids, Healthy Future Task Force report is available at www.gov.mb.ca/healthykids/index.html.

• Safe play areas on farms

Marshfield Clinic offers some terrific resources on making farms safer for children including a booklet on Creating Safe Play Areas on Farms. They also have links to many other farm safety resources. Visit their website: www.marshfieldclinic.org/nfmc/pages/default.aspx?page=nfmc_reports



• PFD Loaner program

We are still welcoming applications from northern communities wanting to start up personal floatation device (PFD) loaner programs. Once an application is received and approved, a supply of PFDs will be sent to the community. The PFDs are then loaned out to members of the community as required. More information is available online at: www.hsc.mb.ca/impact/s_w_index.htm

• IP Best Practices Papers are now online!

Under contract to Manitoba Healthy Living, IMPACT developed four reports on best practices for reducing injuries in Manitoba. These are now posted on the Manitoba Healthy Living Website. Visit www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/injury_bestpractices.html to view:

- Preventing Drowning in Manitoba
- Preventing Falls and Fall-related Injuries in Manitoba
- Preventing Motor Vehicle Occupant Injuries in Manitoba
- Preventing Suffocation and Choking Injuries in Manitoba

• Kids that Click

Safe Kids Canada has teamed up with HBC to publish a new resource to help parents select and use car and booster seats appropriate to their child's age and size. Kids that Click: Keep your Kids Safe on Every Ride provides parents with tips for buying and using car and booster seats. These booklets are available in English and French.

[Kids that Click](#) can be viewed on the Safe Kids Website. Large and small quantities can be ordered by calling 1 (888) SAFE-TIPS (1 800 723-3847) or by sending an e-mail to safekids.web@sickkids.ca.

• Brandon's Safe Kids Street Safety Fair

A beautiful sunny day in June set the stage for Brandon's first Safe Kids Street Safety Fair, a project of the Brandon Safe Kids Week Coalition. The Coalition decided in February to plan a large community event for 2006 in celebration of the ten-year anniversary of Safe Kids Canada. Coalition members noted local media stories involving children in car – pedestrian crashes and resolved to host an interactive event focusing on street safety for families.

More than 400 people attended the event at a vacant downtown parking lot and enjoyed free hot dogs, drinks and watermelon. After picking up a Street Safety Passport, people were able to visit safety stations including: bicycle safety (Brandon Police Services), bicycle helmet fittings, car seat safety checks (Office of the Fire Commissioner certified students), street and rail crossing station (CN Police), Brandon Fire Department's Hazard House, engine and ambulance.

Draw prizes included a new bicycle, a booster seat and summer gift packs. Local magician, Bonzozo, and mascots Louis the Lightning Bug (Manitoba Hydro), Buckles (Canadian Red Cross) and Sparky (Office of the Fire Commissioner) made special appearances. The children received lots of giveaways when they went through the stations or met up with the mascots. Following the event, our prize draws included bike helmets for over 20 of the kids who visited the helmet fitting station.

Local radio station, STAR FM, promoted the event ahead of the date and provided music and live coverage on site. Over 50 volunteers assisted with the Street Safety Fair and many local sponsors contributed in-kind donations, including food and gift supplies. A special thank you to our major sponsors, The Cooperators (WestProtect Insurance), Kiwanis Club of Brandon and Safe Kids Canada.

The question at the end of the day: "Are you going to do this again next year?" Yes, we likely will – we learned a lot, we had very positive feedback from parents and kids alike, and we know people had a lot of fun while they learned about street safety and home safety. We will try to grow this event another time and involve more community partners. We intend to keep it in downtown and maintain a fun-filled, learning atmosphere at no or low cost for kids and their families and caregivers. On September 9, 2006, children's safety will be integrated into the annual D.A.S.H. tent at the Riverbank Discovery Centre – another way for us to partner and share our local safety resources.

Thank you Brandon for helping make our community safer!

Submitted by Sharon Young, Brandon Safe Kids Week Coalition
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• IMPACT Research Updates

IMPACT has been working diligently to identify the injury issues that are unique to Manitoba.

Last summer, IMPACT investigated the levels of child supervision and awareness of water safety signs at staffed and unstaffed Manitoba Provincial Park Beaches. The final document [Parent & Caregiver Levels of Child Supervision and Attention to Signage at Beach Areas: An Observation and Interview Study](#) is now available on our website. This study was funded by the Manitoba Coalition for Safer Waters.

Since 1996, IMPACT has intermittently conducted observational field research on the use of bike helmets. This was last done by Medical Student, Justin Rivard (funded by IMPACT and University of Manitoba Student Honorarium) in 2003/2004, who expanded the study to include use of helmets and other safety equipment by cyclists as well as in-line skaters and scooter riders. This year, research assistant, Gemma Briggs is out in the hot Manitoba sun observing safety equipment use. Results will be posted on our website at a later date. This year's study has been funded by Manitoba Healthy Living.

For more information on IMPACT's research activities, visit our website at www.hsc.mb.ca/impact.



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