



Scooter Safety

We see them everywhere, children of all ages using them on sidewalks and in streets, and often they're not wearing helmets. It's the old made new again, lightweight, portable scooters. They feature low-friction skate wheels, light materials and a collapsible handlebar.

Scooter Usage

- The Directorate for Economic Analysis, a division of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) that tracks the safety effects of CPSC policies, predicts this year's scooter sales to be 2 to 5 million units - an increase from virtually zero in 1999.¹
- Two-thirds of all scooter-related injuries are to males. For the first time, in September 2000, scooter injuries surpassed in-line skating injuries.²



Statistics

- In the year 2000, there were almost 40,000 emergency room treated injuries associated with scooters.²
- In September of that year alone, there were 8,600 injuries - an increase of nearly 1,800 percent from May to September 2000.²
- Children under age 15 are the most common users of scooters.¹
- About 90 percent of the injuries sustained in scooter crashes happen to children under 15.¹
- Nearly one third of injuries sustained in scooter crashes in 2000 have involved children under age eight.¹
- Proper use of helmets could reduce brain injuries by 85 percent.¹
- Brain injuries can be particularly serious in children, whose heads are proportionately larger than adults so they tend to land head first.

Prevention

- Knee and elbow pads, along with wrist guards, could prevent 34 percent of the total injuries.¹
- The CPSC suggests that children under age eight not ride scooters without close adult supervision.¹
- In early September 2000, the CPSC issued a press release warning that scooter injuries were on the rise and recommended wearing a bicycle helmet, knee pads and elbow pads. The advice was very similar to CPSC's findings on in-line skate injuries back in 1997.³
- In October, press reports stated that twelve communities in the U.S. had adopted or were considering laws to require helmets for scooter users, including laws already adopted in Medford, NJ; Raleigh, NC; Milton, WA and San Francisco, CA. In addition, Elizabeth, NJ now has a law, and there is a bill pending to adopt a statewide law in New Jersey.³
- The Consumer Product Safety Commission has reports of five deaths relating to non-powered scooters. Three deaths were reported in January 2001. A man riding a scooter down an Albuquerque roadway at night was struck and killed by a pickup truck on January 25, 2001. A 12-year-old boy from Spring Hill, Fla., died January 20, 2001, after both he and his twin brother were hit by a car while riding their scooters. A 10-year-old boy from Forest, Ohio, died January 6, 2001 after a fall from a scooter. The other two deaths were both in September 2000 - a man died in Richmond, Va., after falling and hitting his head, and a 6-year-old boy was hit by a car while riding a scooter in Elizabeth, N.J.²
- There are lots of helmets available that will be adequate for scooter protection, particularly since in-line skate helmets and bicycle helmets are designed to an identical American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standard. In addition, make sure you see a CPSC label inside the helmet.³



Sources:

1. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety September/October 2000.1.
2. Consumer Product Safety Commission - "More Scooter Information."
3. Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute November 18, 2000.