

Injury Leading Cause of Child Deaths in Delaware

Help Your Children Have a Safe Spring and Summer

DOVER – Spring and summer months often mean a more active lifestyle for families. The Division of Public Health (DPH) encourages Delawareans to be active and have fun, but also be smart and protect yourself and loved ones from injury. Unintentional injuries—such as those caused by falls, traffic incidents, burns, drowning, and poisoning—are the leading cause of death and injury in Delaware and the U.S. To learn more on how to protect your child from unintentional injuries, visit the Delaware Coalition for Injury Prevention at <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/ems/injuryprevention.html>.

“Lives are changed forever by injuries, many of which could have been prevented or made less serious by using injury prevention measures on a regular basis,” said DPH Division Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. “Things like adult supervision when swimming, biking or playing; always using a car seat or seatbelt; wearing a helmet while biking, roller skating or skateboarding; and avoiding unknown animals, can protect our children. And, keeping children away from fireworks, matches, hot stoves, and chemicals can prevent life-threatening burns and poisonings.”

Delaware Trauma System Registry statistics show that in 2013, 586 Delaware children and adolescents were injured seriously enough to require hospitalization. And, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), every 4 seconds a child is treated for an injury in an emergency department. Injuries due to transportation are the leading cause of injury-related death for children. There are also a substantial number of pedestrian and cycling deaths, and drowning is the leading

cause of injury death for children ages 1 to 4. Injuries can occur across all spectrums of everyday life, and in many cases are preventable.

“Preventable injuries are the number one killer of children ages 1 to 19 in the United States. But how many people know that? And how many people believe it would never happen to them?” said Kate Carr, CEO of Safe Kids Worldwide. “The reality is a child dies almost every hour from a preventable injury. Millions more are injured in ways that can affect them for a lifetime. These are more than statistics. They represent real and devastating tragedies for families and communities. Yet we can change this outcome. We can give parents the information and resources they need to create an environment where their children can thrive.”

The good news is that national death rates among children and adolescents declined nearly 30 percent in the last decade, according to the CDC. This is a success story showing that injury prevention programs and policies are making a difference and saving lives. But there is still much work to do in continuing to save the lives of children. As stated by former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop, “If a disease were killing our children at the rate unintentional injuries are, the public would be outraged and demand that this killer be stopped.”

DPH encourages everyone to take an active role in injury prevention for the youth of Delaware. The DPH Office of Emergency Medical Services has served as the lead agency for Delaware Safe Kids since 1992. With active coalitions in all three counties, Delaware Safe Kids has been a driving force in raising awareness and education on childhood injury prevention. For more information or to become involved with Delaware Safe Kids, contact the program office at safekids@delaware.gov.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving

the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, drink almost no sugary beverages.

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