

Use Your Head!

Wear a Helmet When Skiing

Each year, thousands of people sustain head and brain injuries as a result of ski accidents. In 1998, the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) reported that ski accidents caused 16,000 head and brain injuries -- mild to severe -- in the United States.

These injuries occur when you fall or hit a hard object or surface, such as a tree, rock, hard-packed snow or another person.

Why Wear a Helmet?

In most reported accidents, the CPSC reports that victims were not wearing helmets. The organization estimates that, each year, helmets could prevent or reduce the severity of more than 7,000 head and brain injuries. By wearing helmets, skiers under 15 years of age could prevent or reduce the severity of their injuries by 53 percent -- adults by 44 percent. Wearing helmets also keeps your head warm!

The Right Fit - Choosing a Helmet

When selecting a helmet, make sure it fits properly and is comfortable. Helmets shouldn't be too snug or tight, and there shouldn't be too much room on the sides. If your helmet doesn't fit you correctly, it won't protect you properly. Helmets should:

- Cover the front of your forehead, back of your head, temples and ears.
- Keep your field of vision clear.
- Allow you to wear ski goggles.
- Allow you to hear clearly.
- Have an adjustable chin-strap.
- Allow good ventilation.

How to Prevent Ski Injuries

In addition to wearing helmets, follow these safety tips when skiing:

- Ski on trails.
- Ski with a partner.
- Ski under control (slow down).
- Know who is skiing near you.
- Know the snow conditions and conditions of the slopes.
- Use properly maintained equipment.
- Replace helmets after they've been involved in a crash. Replace children's helmets after they grow significantly.
- Make sure you have proper training, and don't ski beyond your ability.
- Avoid skiing after drinking alcohol, using medication, or taking any type of drug.
- Wear warm, close-fitting clothing. Loose clothing can become entangled in lifts, tow ropes and ski poles.