

April is declared All-terrain Vehicle Safety Month in Arkansas

Children younger than 16 Years of Age at High Risk for ATV Injury

Governor Mike Beebe has declared April 2013 to be All-terrain Vehicle (ATV) Safety Awareness Month. ATVs are very popular in the state of Arkansas. They are used for farming, hunting, and recreation. However, riding or operating an ATV comes with a substantial risk of serious injury, particularly for children and teens.

According to the Children's Safety Network, those under sixteen are four times more likely to sustain ATV-related injuries that require a visit to the emergency department than riders sixteen and older. Factors such as children's physical size, strength, coordination, and maturity level can lead to unsafe situations.

Jasper School District is participating in ATV Safety Awareness Month by an ATV Safety Assembly on April 17th for high school students. This will be accomplished by partnering with Arkansas Children's Hospital and local health professionals.

During 2012, Arkansas Children's Hospital admitted ninety five children with ATV-related injuries. Ages of children involved ranged from six months to twenty-one years and the children resided in counties all over Arkansas. Injuries included concussions (i.e. brain injury), spinal fractures, fractures of arms, legs and pelvis and serious internal injuries. Sadly, some of these injuries resulted in death.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that no one under the age of 16 ride on or operate an ATV. However, recognizing that many parents in Arkansas choose to allow children to ride these vehicles, the Injury Prevention Center at Arkansas Children's Hospital recommends the following safety tips:

- Wearing a helmet can reduce the risk of death in a crash by almost half.
- Children should not ride adult-sized ATVs. Ride without passengers.-Most ATVs are designed for single riders only.
- ATVs are not designed to be operated on paved roadways and should only be ridden off road.
- Get hands on training-on how to operate an ATV safely and correctly. Training is offered free of charge by the Cooperative Extension:

For more information on ATV safety, contact the Injury Prevention Center at Arkansas Children's Hospital by phone at (866) 611-3445 or by email at injuryprevention@archildrens.org. We would also like to encourage everyone who rides ATV's to get training offered through the U of A Cooperative Extension Services.