

Tips to Prevent Horseback Riding Injuries

Horseback riding is great exercise for the entire body. But if you don't take appropriate precautions, you can be seriously injured while riding. According to the National Electronic Surveillance Survey (NEISS), an estimated 73,576 people were treated in hospital emergency rooms for horseback riding injuries in 2005. Most frequently, horseback riding injuries happen occur to the arms as riders try to break a fall. These injuries include bruises, sprains, strains, and fractures of the wrist, shoulder, and elbow. The most serious horseback riding injuries can damage the spine and head.



Here are some tips from the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) to prevent horseback-riding injuries:

- ❖ All riders should always wear horseback riding helmets that meet proper safety standards.
- ❖ Wear properly fitted, sturdy leather boots with a minimal heel. Your clothing should be comfortable and not too loose.
- ❖ Inspect all riding equipment to make sure it is not damaged.
- ❖ Be sure the saddle and stirrups are appropriate to your size and are properly adjusted.
- ❖ Secure all riding equipment properly.
- ❖ Children and novice riders should consider using safety stirrups that break away if a rider falls off the horse.
- ❖ Novice riders should take lessons from experienced instructors.
- ❖ Young horseback riders should always be supervised.
- ❖ Amateurs should ride on open, flat terrain or in monitored riding arenas.
- ❖ Jumps and stunts require a higher level of riding skill. Do not attempt these without supervision.
- ❖ If you feel yourself falling from a horse, try to roll to the side (away from the horse) when you hit the ground.
- ❖ Do not ride a horse when you are tired, taking medications, or under the influence of alcohol.
- ❖ Always remember that you are riding an animal that has its own reactions to the sights, sounds, and smells you are both experiencing.
- ❖ Horses are flight animals. They will run away from sudden noises and movements. Stay alert for anything that might startle your horse. Be prepared to respond quickly.
- ❖ Never walk behind a horse. It is best to approach them at their shoulder. This is less threatening to them.
- ❖ Observe the horse's head, particularly its ears. The ear movements of a horse will provide you with information about how the horse is reacting to its environment, people, or other animals. A horse will direct one or both of its ears toward a sound. Ears held the side can indicate that a horse is sick, sedated, or sleeping. Ears that are pinned back indicate anger or a threat.
- ❖ If you are giving the horse a treat, be sure to keep your hand open and your fingers extended and flat. Horses can inadvertently bite and break fingers that are enclosing the treat.
- ❖ By following these safety tips and being aware of your horse's behavior you can enjoy all the benefits and pleasure of horseback riding.

Information provided by the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons



Ice or Heat?

Patients often ask when they should use ice or heat after an injury. While both modalities are beneficial, they must be used in the right timeframe. Follow these tips when trying to decide which to use:

Ice

- Helps stop bleeding by causing blood vessels to contract which decreases swelling
- Decreases pain and muscle spasm which can then help increase range of motion
- Use ice for the first 72 hours after an injury
- Ice bags, ice massage, ice water immersion, or even bags of frozen vegetables can be used
- Ice for 20 minutes every 2 hours 3-5 times a day
- Ice can also be used after activities to prevent swelling and irritation

Heat

- Helps increase blood flow to the injured area by dilating the blood vessels. This is necessary for tissue healing but should not be done until after the acute stage, 72 hours after injury
- Decreases pain and muscle spasm
- Hot compresses, hydrocollator packs, heating pads, and whirlpools can be used
- Use heat for 15-20 minutes 3-5 times a day, usually before stretching or engaging in an activity.



Sports Medicine Coaches Invitational Golf Tournament

The Sports Medicine Center's Coaches Invitational Golf Tournament is set for July 10, 2008 at White Deer Golf Course. Proceeds benefit The Sports Medicine Center's Basic and Advanced Student Athletic Trainer Workshops, held annually to educate area students interested in the Athletic Training field.

If you are interested in playing or being a sponsor in the tournament please call **Mike Ludwikowski** (570) 320-7456 or email mludwikowski@susquehannahealth.org.

18th Annual Student Athletic Trainers' Workshop

The 18th Annual Student Athletic Trainers' Workshop will be held at the ELYMCA community room July 13-17 and the Advanced Workshop from July 13-15 for students interested in sports medicine. The workshops provide comprehensive instruction in basic and advanced athletic training to students entering their sophomore, junior or senior years.

Basic topics include:

- CPR instruction and certification.
- First aid instruction.
- Taping and wrapping.
- Recognition and management of injuries.
- Sideline and training room organization.
- Injury prevention.
- Information on careers in sports medicine.

Advanced topics include:

- Anatomy of head, shoulders, extremities, etc.
- Examination of head and neck injuries.
- Shoulder injury care.
- Modalities such as whirlpools, muscle stimulation and ultrasound.

Students who participate in the workshop can apply their skills in the high school setting.

Mike Ludwikowski, M.S., ATC, coordinator of Outreach Athletic Training Services, will lead the workshops along with staff members of the Sports Medicine Center. The workshops are made possible by funds raised at the Annual Coaches Invitational Golf Tournament. For more information please contact Mike at (570) 320-7456 or email mludwikowski@susquehannahealth.org.

Happy Summer!



www.susquehannahealth.org/SportsMedicineCenter