

New study finds low rate of injuries at overnight summer camp

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Although a trip to summer camp is highly anticipated by over 11 million children and adults each year, sending a child off to summer camp can be a source of anxiety for parents. Findings from a new study published in the December issue of *Injury Prevention* should ease their concerns however.

According to the American Camp Association's Healthy Camp Study, the first to examine the epidemiology of injury rates in a large sample of resident camps located throughout the United States and Canada, the risk of serious injury at resident summer camps is relatively low compared to other popular youth activities.

"The good news for parents is that our data show that serious injuries are uncommon at resident summer camps," said Dawn Comstock, associate professor at the Center for Injury Research and Policy of Nationwide Children's Hospital and The Ohio State University College of Medicine. "The reported injury rate among campers was comparable to those in similar youth activities like sports or playing on playgrounds."

According to the study, less than 3 percent of camp injuries required hospital admission, while almost all who sustained an injury either remained at camp for treatment or returned to camp after off-site treatment. Nearly 75 percent of the injuries were sustained by campers with just over 25 percent sustained by camp staff members.

The majority of injuries occurred during scheduled camp activities.

Barry Garst, director of program development and research application at the American Camp Association® (ACA), stated, "One popular opinion is that injuries at camps occur most frequently during unsupervised events. Our findings suggest that this may not be the case."

While the overall risk of serious injury was low, long-term camp sessions, lasting 14 or more days, did present an increased risk of serious injury. "Long-term camps may be offering higher risk activities," said lead author Eric Goldlust, who conducted this research at the University of Michigan. "Uncovering [injury](#) patterns such as these should help us determine the best ways to help camps prevent injuries in the future."

To help parents choose the best camps for children, ACA has developed a comprehensive summer camp resource for families - offering expert advice from camp professionals on camp selection, readiness, child and youth development, and issues of importance to families. Visit www.CampParents.org for more information. Some tips from this site include how to identify the best camp for your child, determining your child's readiness for camp, and questions to ask the camp director including questions regarding the camp's philosophy, program emphasis, and information on camp counselors and other staff.

Source: Nationwide Children's Hospital ([news](#) : [web](#))

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