

Too Many Children Hit By Cars This Summer

June 21 2010



Jacey Taylor (right) and her friend R.J. Harris (left) are relieved that Jacey checked out okay at the Pediatric Emergency Department at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt.

(PhysOrg.com) -- Pediatric Emergency experts at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt say they are very concerned about the number of children who have been hit by cars since schools let out in the Nashville area.

Between May 27 and June 17, the Pediatric [Emergency Department](#) treated 10 children who were hit by cars. Half of those were critically injured and three more had broken bones or internal injuries. The ages and circumstances vary. [Toddlers](#) have been backed over and children under age 10 have been hit running into the street without looking, or chasing a toy.

“Even older children are not following safety rules. I almost hit a child around age 12 this morning on my way to work,” said Thomas Abramo, M.D., professor of Pediatric Emergency Medicine and director of the Pediatric Emergency Department. “The child simply decided not to use the crosswalk, but cut across diagonally across traffic,” he said.

Twelve-year-old Jacey Taylor was a lucky adolescent who made poor choices and skirted rules. On June 11, she and her friend R.J. Harris rode their bikes to a convenience store to get some candy. On the way back home, Jacey was hit by a van.

“She was ahead of me and I noticed that when she went to cross the street, other cars stopped to let her by, but this van driver didn’t see her and just kept going,” R.J. said.

Jacey suffered only scrapes and bruises, but says she knows she made mistakes. She had been riding her bike without a helmet and had been told not to cross the street. She says it was a frightening experience, and she just wasn’t thinking.

“I just kind of let go and relaxed completely. I bounced off the hood of the van, but the bike took most of the force and I hit the ground on my leg,” Jacey said.

Jacey was one of the lucky few who sustained only scrapes and bruises. She was released from the emergency department that same day. Her mother says it was a wake-up call.

“We certainly tell them the rules, but now we will be reinforcing it with them every single time they go out to ride,” said Tracy Miller. “This was very scary. We are very lucky Jacey wasn’t hurt worse.”

Abramo says families need to know that children under the age of 10 are

too young to cross streets alone, or play or walk near street traffic without parental supervision. Everyone, young and old, should wear a helmet when using a riding toy or bicycle. For older children, frequent reminders and solid rules are needed to ensure children never ignore pedestrian safety.

“If older adolescents don’t follow pedestrian safety rules, they shouldn’t be allowed to cross roadways on their own until they demonstrate they will follow the rules. Adults also need to be extra alert and careful now that school is out, to observe children at all times especially in their own driveways and neighborhoods,” Abramo said.

Pedestrian Safety Tips

Source: Safe Kids

- Cross streets safely. Cross at a corner, using traffic signals and crosswalks.
- Try to make eye contact with drivers before crossing in front of them. Do not assume that because you can see the driver, the driver can see you.
- Look left, right and left again when crossing, and keep looking as you cross.
- Walk; do not run, across the street.
- Walk on sidewalks or paths. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible.
- Be a safe pedestrian around cars. Watch for cars that are turning or backing up.

- Parents and children should hold hands in parking lots.

Parent safety tips:

- Never allow children under age 10 to cross streets alone. Adult supervision is essential until you are sure a child has good traffic skills and judgment.
- Make sure children know to cross 10 feet in front of a school bus, never behind, and to wait for adults on the same side of the street as the school bus loading or unloading zone.
- Teach your child never to run out into a street for a ball, a pet or any other reason.
- Make sure your child plays in safe places away from motor vehicles, such as yards, parks and playgrounds, and never in the street.
- Fence off play areas from driveways and streets.
- Check frequently for children when backing out of a driveway or a parking space.

Key Facts from SafeKids.org

- * Each year, approximately 630 child pedestrian fatalities occur.
- * [Children](#) sustain more than 39,000 nonfatal pedestrian injuries each year.
- * The maturity level of a child under 10 years of age makes him/her unable to correctly gauge the speed of vehicles putting them at greater

risk for injury and death.

Provided by Vanderbilt Medical Center

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