

Vanderbilt physicians urge caution as children go sledding

January 11 2011, by Jeremy Rush

(PhysOrg.com) -- As schools throughout the area remain closed today, Vanderbilt physicians urge caution as children go sledding.

According to the U.S. [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#), thousands of [children](#) are treated at emergency rooms, doctors' offices and clinics as a result of sledding, snow tubing and tobogganing-related injuries.

"Children in this area are not used to large snowfalls and sledding and don't understand the potential for hitting objects at high velocity," said Thomas Abramo, M.D., professor of Emergency Medicine and Pediatrics.

Abramo's No. 1 tip for safe sledding is to sled feet-first rather than head-first.

He said it is also important to be careful around roads and parked cars and to understand the sledding equipment, especially knowing how to steer and brake.

"Children should be well-supervised by responsible adults, and adults should anticipate accidents and be prepared to respond," he said.

More caution is also needed as conditions become icier today.

"The harder the surface, the faster the sled goes. On ice it is harder to stop and turn," Abramo said.

Tips for safe sledding:

- * Children should be supervised by an adult
- * Sled feet-first
- * Make sure the sled's path does not cross traffic and is free from obstacles such as trees, fences, rocks and telephone poles
- * Don't intentionally run into others
- * Never pull a sled behind a moving vehicle

Provided by Vanderbilt Medical Center

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