

# Top 5 winter activities to land you in the ER

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(Medical Xpress) -- The first day of winter was Wednesday, Dec. 21, and many states are bracing for a season of snow and ice. Broken bones from snowboarding and sledding top the list of common visits to the Emergency Department (ED) during the winter months. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one-quarter of all emergency hospital visits are attributed to snowboarding accidents, and half of all cases were for broken bones and sprains.

Chicagoans embrace winter with gusto largely because of the great love for hockey, sledding and ice skating, said Gottlieb Memorial Hospital orthopaedic surgeon Daryl O'Connor, who cared for U.S. Olympic ski and winter-sports athletes in 2002 in Salt Lake City. Dr. O'Connor is board certified in orthopaedic surgery and now specializes in sports medicine in the Orthopaedic Department at Gottlieb Memorial Hospital, part of Loyola University Health System.

Here are Dr. O'Connor's evaluations of the top five winter sports in terms of injuries:

1. Sledding: More than 700,000 injuries are reported each year in the United States due to sledding. More than 30 percent are head injuries, caused by collisions, Dr. O'Connor said.
2. Hockey: Lacerations, as well as neck, shoulder and knee injuries are common in hockey. Many injuries are caused through contact with another player, the ice, a puck or actual skate blade, he said.

3. Ice skating: Injuries to the wrist, head and neck are most common and most injuries are caused by falls, Dr. O'Connor said.

4. Snowboarding: Wrist and elbow injuries are caused by falls on outstretched hands, he said.

5. Skiing: Knees really take a pounding and injuries are often caused by the extreme twisting force propelled by the skis, he said.

## **Snitching on Skitching**

This is not even a sport; it's just being foolish, Dr. O'Connor said of the practice in neighborhoods of daredevil teens grabbing a car's rear bumper and sliding on their feet, or being pulled by ropes on inner tubes or sleds through icy streets. "In addition to broken bones, neck and shoulder injuries, young people can suffer fatal head trauma. Please, resist the skitch at all costs."

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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