

C.S. Mott poll addresses child safety at amusement parks

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(HealthDay)—One in five parents say they have not made plans with

their children about what to do if they became separated at an amusement park or carnival, according to the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health at the University of Michigan.

In a survey that included more than 1,200 parents of children aged 5 to 12, the poll authors also asked parents what they would do if ride operators did not enforce safety rules or if they suspected the operator of unsafe behavior. Nine in 10 parents said they would report suspicions that the operator was drunk or on drugs, and 69 percent said they would report failure to enforce safety rules, such as seat belts or height restrictions. Nearly six in 10 parents believe ride operators should undergo random alcohol and drug testing, with 13 percent supporting weekly testing, 13 percent in favor of monthly testing, and 3 percent backing yearly testing. Eleven percent said checks should only be done if there were suspicions of drug or alcohol use, the survey found. While most parents said they would report a ride operator who appeared impaired by alcohol or drugs, less than half said they would report a ride operator who used a cellphone while operating a ride.

In 2016, U.S. emergency departments dealt with 30,000 injuries linked to amusement parks and carnivals, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

"As parents prepare for summer trips to the amusement park or local fair, they should keep safety at the top of mind," poll co-director Gary Freed, M.D., M.P.H., of the University of Michigan Medical School in Ann Arbor, said in a university news release. "As we've seen in news reports, accidents happen at amusement parks. Consequences range from skinned knees to serious injuries."

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