

# More than half of lawn mower injuries to children require an amputation

1 March 2016

Warnings, operating instructions, design modifications and safety tips all aim to protect children and teens from injuries caused by lawn mowers. However, a study presented today at the 2016 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) found that an alarming number of serious injuries still occur, with 53 percent of injured children requiring an amputation.

Researchers reviewed data from the Pennsylvania Trauma Outcome Study on the 199 children, ages 0 to 17 (mean age 8), admitted to a pediatric or adult trauma center between 2002 and 2013 with lawnmower [injury](#). Among the findings:

- Boys accounted for 81 percent of the injuries.
- 55 percent of the injuries involved a riding mower.
- The most common injury site was the lower extremity, accounting for 65 percent of injuries.
- 106 of the children required an amputation
- Common circumstances where injuries occurred included: children running behind a mower; slipping under the mower while riding as a passenger; colliding with mower blades when machines were steered in reverse; and being struck by a mowers that rolled over due to an uneven and/or wet surface. Often, injuries occurred when adults did not realize children were near the mower.
- 91 percent of injuries occurred between April and September.

In addition, the study found that despite ongoing and increased efforts to educate parents and children about the dangers of lawn mowers, the number of reported injuries requiring trauma center treatment remained steady: an average of 16 per year in Pennsylvania.

While AAOS, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and other child and health organizations offer safety tips and precautions to avoid lawn mower injuries, the study found that many parents and children are not aware of, or not following them.

"We have to find a way to stop kids from being around mowers," said lead study author Douglas Armstrong, MD, director of pediatric orthopaedic surgery at Penn State Hershey Pediatric Bone and Joint Institute. "Many parents don't realize that the blade is such a forceful, blunt instrument—even if it is hidden under the mower.

"These injuries are devastating to the kids and their families," said Dr. Armstrong.

The study authors recommend the creation of a spring education campaign to remind parents on how to keep their children safe from lawn-mower injuries. Social media, school nurses, pediatricians, television ads, and other resources could be effectively employed to inform parents and children, particularly people in rural and agricultural areas where large lawn machinery is used.

#### More information:

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Provided by American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons

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