



JANUARY Newsletter

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THE TIME FOR SAFER SLEDDING IS NOW!

One of the few pleasures we get to experience living in the Midwest during winter is a day of sledding. We probably all remember those days of family fun while we were growing up—bundling up against the bitter cold, climbing that hill, and whizzing down on our plastic sleds. Ah, the good times.

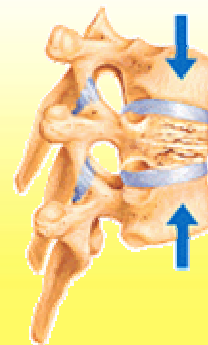
Today, when we try to do the same thing, we end up trudging up that darn hill with aching joints, and feeling like our tailbones are cracked when our behinds hit the snow. Recent studies have shown that maybe we're doing the sledding thing all wrong. Some say you should never go down the hill face-first. Some say you should never sit on the sled. Everyone says not to stand up on the sled. What is the right answer?

First of all, it is important to realize that sledding accidents can and do occur to people of all ages. Sledding has been shown to be somewhat of a dangerous recreational activity, with between 30,000 and 50,000 children in the US ending up in the emergency room with sledding injuries each year (1). The majority of injuries occur to children between the ages of 5 and 14, with boys being injured more often than girls. So no matter how much fun a day of sledding can be, there are real risks involved and safety must come first.



Let's tackle the face-first position. This position saves your low back from taking the brunt of the force while sledding, but your neck is in an extremely vulnerable position. The face-first position puts your body at a high risk for whiplash injuries, and could result in spinal cord damage. This is probably the worst position to be in while sledding, so never do it!

Most of us were taught to sit down while sledding. But there is a huge downside to this position, too. Sitting on your sled puts all the impact on your spine, pelvis, and sacrum, and can result in compression fractures in your spinal column. Compression fractures are caused when a severe impact occurs which causes vertebra to collapse. Compression fractures can be painful and lead to early degenerative disc disease and changes in your biomechanics. Compression fractures can also put direct pressure on spinal nerves, causing not only pain, but loss of function in the areas that those nerves serve.



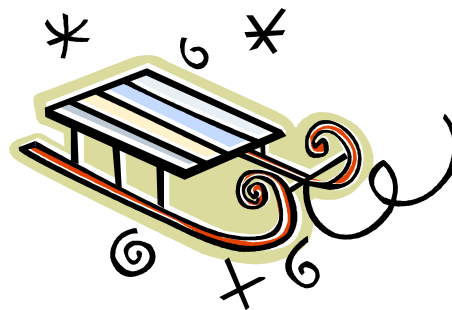
So, what position is safe?

The position that seems to be the safest to go down a hill on a sled is on your knees. This takes the stress off your neck, as compared to the face-first position, and it also gives some extra shock absorption to your spine, pelvis, and sacrum, as compared to a seated position.



Keep in mind that injuries can happen very unexpectedly. When you are out in the cold having fun, you may not be able to feel the same aches and pains that you would normally feel if you were indoors and warm with your adrenaline at rest. Make sure to pay close attention to your body after sledding, and pay particular attention to your children.

If you or your child do experience an injury while sledding, seek care immediately. If you have prolonged discomfort following a day of sledding, see your Chiropractor as soon as possible to prevent long-term damage.



In order to reduce the risk of any type of injury while sledding, follow these tips:

1. Check out the hill: choose hills with a gentle slope and long runoff area.
2. Avoid icy areas—these give you a harder surface to land on, increasing the risk of injury.
3. Be sure the hill is free of jumps, bumps, holes, rocks and other obstacles.
4. Keep your arms and legs within the sled while going down the hill.
5. If you fall off the sled or stop unexpectedly, move out of the way of other sledders quickly.
6. Walk back up the side of the hill, out of the way of other sledders.
7. Wear an appropriate helmet to reduce the risk of serious head injury.
8. Make sure there is appropriate supervision! Children under 5 should have an adult on the sled with them. Monitor children for wet clothes, chilling, frostbite, and fatigue.

Source: GenesisHealth.com

CHECK US OUT AT THE BABY & KIDS EXPO!



baby
& kids
expo

The event is being held February 21, 2009 from 9am-2pm at the Alltel Center in Mankato. This is a great event to attend if you are planning a family or expecting, or if you've already started a family! Information will be available on health topics, nutritional information, and some of the latest trends in clothing, toys, and products. There will also be information on many organizations in the community and how you can get your children involved in activities.

Admission is FREE!

For more information about the event, visit www.eventsandexpos.com/babykidsexpo.php