

Toboggan Related Injuries in Alberta

Emergency Department Visits by Age Group, 2013

Tobogganing is an enjoyable winter leisure activity across Alberta for both children and adults. Unfortunately, many people, mostly children, are often injured while tobogganing or sledding. The primary reasons for injury are from falling off the sled; or from running into objects, such as trees, rocks, fences, or other people. Health Canada¹ recommends the following guidance for reducing the risk of an injury: children should wear a well-fitting helmet, choose a hill away from roadways and free of debris, teach children to slide down the middle of the hill and climb up on the sides, and teach children to move quickly to the side when reaching the bottom of the hill.

Today's issue of *Health Trends Alberta* focuses on the age distribution of toboggan-related emergency department (ED) visits in Alberta for 2013.

Toboggan-related ED visits common among children

In 2013, there were 602 ED visits in Alberta related to toboggan and sled use, of which 343 (57 per cent) were attributed to children aged 5 to 14. Males made up the 54 per cent of the ED visits, or 327 visits.

For the 10-year period 2004 to 2013 the number of ED visits fluctuated from a low 375 to a high of 731, and averaged 544 per year with no discernable upward or downward trend.

Among the 602 ED visits in 2013, head injury (198 ED visits; 34 per cent) was the most common injury type, followed by injuries to the shoulder or upper arm (69 ED visits; 12 per cent), and to the knee or lower leg (69 ED visits; 12 per cent). Of the 602 ED visits, 36 (6 per cent) were admitted as inpatients.

¹<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/child-enfant/play-jeu-eng.php#a45>

