

Skateboarding Safety Tips

Torey Botti, MD

Flagstaff is definitely a biking town, but a lot of you have probably noticed plenty of skateboarders riding around. Skating is a vibrant sport here. Flagstaff has 3 skate parks and the hilly streets make for great cruising. In our arid climate the conditions are always ideal. Skateboarding is both exhilarating and a great physical workout.



It is truly the street equivalent to surfing and snowboarding.

With TV coverage showing competitors flying off giant ramps, people commonly perceive skateboarding as an extremely hazardous sport. A recent study looking at the injury rate per 1000 sport exposures found boxing (5.2 injuries per 1000 exposures), football (3.8), and snowboarding (3.8) to be the most dangerous sports, whereas skateboarding, with 0.8 injuries per 1000 exposures, came in 22nd. However, skateboard injuries do occur.

There are some simple safety guidelines that can decrease skateboarding injuries. Firstly, children under 6 should not ride a skateboard. Young children have a high center of gravity (large heads), poor coordination and limited muscle control. They are head injuries waiting to happen. Head injuries are, in fact, the most serious injury associated with skateboarding, and not surprisingly, are easily prevented by wearing a helmet. A bicycle or snowboard helmet will do. Elbow and knee pads, wrist guards, and shoes are also required. Pads might not seem “cool”, but even pros wear pads when they practice.

Pads are especially important for beginners. Nearly a third of all injuries happen to beginners in their first few days of learning, so in addition to pads, all novice skaters should consider taking a lesson. Extra care should be taken when skating outside of a park. Flagstaff is blessed to have rolling hills and smooth streets, but most serious skateboard injuries are associated with motor vehicle collisions.

I hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable summer skating season.

Dr. Botti is a previous physician for the X-games, and has worked with both professional and recreational skaters and extreme sport athletes. To schedule an appointment with Dr. Botti, please call 928.773.2472.



