



PARENT PLUS

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

Fore! Golf carts are dangerous for children

The next time you take your little Tiger Woods to the golf course, consider walking to the next hole.

Injuries tied to golf cart accidents rose more than 130% between 1990 and 2006, and almost one-third of the injuries were sustained by children ages 16 and under, according to a study by the Center for Injury Research and Policy (CIRP) at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio.

"Children are even more likely than adults to fall from the golf cart, and these falls are associated with higher rates of head and neck injuries and hospitalizations," said pediatrician Gary A. Smith, M.D., Dr.P.H., FAAP, director of CIRP.

The use of golf carts for non-golf purposes, such as at sports events, airports and even for driving on the street, accounts for increasing injury rates. Poor safety regulations concerning the construction of golf carts (some of which can reach speeds of 25 mph) also contribute to the rise in injuries.

Parents can protect their children

from potentially deadly golf-cart related injuries by following these precautions, which are based on recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics regarding all-terrain vehicles and other means of transportation similar to golf carts, and recommendations from CIRP:

- Do not let children younger than 6 years ride in golf carts.
- Do not let children under the age of 16 years and untrained drivers operate a golf cart.
- If possible, use a golf cart with seat belts and all-wheel brakes.
- Make sure your child is sitting with his/her back touching the seat's back. Have the child hold onto the cart's handgrips to prevent sliding off the seat and falling out of the moving cart.
- Drive at a cautious speed (under 10 mph).
- Consider the weather and path conditions and adjust your driving accordingly.



- Brake slower and earlier than you would in a regular motor vehicle to prevent brakes from locking and the cart from swerving and overturning.
- Avoid driving golf carts at night or on streets.
- Make sure your cart is working properly before you drive it.

Finally, if you don't need to drive a golf cart then don't — not only will you and your child avoid the potential hazard of golf cart-related injuries, you both will get exercise from walking.

— Asma Ahmad