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INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

Is your child ready to take on mowing the lawn?

While cutting the grass is a common household chore, it can be extremely dangerous for kids.

In 2010, 17,000 youths under age 19 were treated for lawn mower-related injuries, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

While all children are at risk of injury when around lawn mowers, keep a close eye on your preteen son. Boys with an average age of 11 make up 75% of children injured by lawn mowers. Injuries range from minor cuts to amputations. The most common injuries are bruises, broken bones and sprains affecting the hands/fingers, legs, feet/toes as well as eye injuries.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that children should be at least 12 years old before they operate a walk-behind mower or hand mower, and 16 years old before driving a riding mower. Regardless of age, a child needs to show maturity, strength and coordination before being allowed to mow the lawn.

Following are recommendations from the AAP that parents should review with their kids before allowing them to mow the lawn:

- Use a mower that has a control to stop the blade if the handle is let go.
- Don't pull the lawn mower backwards unless absolutely necessary.
- Turn off the mower and wait for the blades to stop before removing the grass catcher, inspecting or repairing the mower, or crossing gravel paths or roads.
- Keep other kids out of the yard when a lawn mower is operating.
- Don't let kids ride as passengers on riding mowers.
- Wear closed toed shoes, clothing with long sleeves and long pants when mowing the lawn.
- Wear protective goggles. If a lawn mower runs over an object in the yard, it could be tossed up in the air and hit someone in the eye.
- Wear earmuffs or earplugs to protect ears from the noise of the motor, which can cause hearing loss.
- Don't listen to music while mowing the lawn. The sound of the music plus noise from the lawn mower can be dangerous for your ears.



— Shayna Starr

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