



What's Happening

Northwest Region Emergency Medical Services
and Trauma Care Council

October 2009

Sports...Head Injury...Death?

Parents take all kinds of precautions to ensure that their kids are safe. They make sure poisons are locked away when their children are young, ensure that they always wear a seatbelt or sit in a child safety seat when riding in the car, and take them for regular check-ups and vaccinations to protect them from illness. Often parents assume that when they turn their kids over to the care of coaches and sports instructors, similar safety measures will be taken to ensure that their kids have a fun, yet safe, sports experience. Sometimes this isn't the case.

Like many things, safety considerations have changed over the years around many aspects of sports. School skiing programs often require participants to wear helmets which was uncommon even a decade ago. Cheerleading has gone from focusing on cheers and dance routines to acrobatics that would challenge a trained gymnast, thus requiring additional safety precautions. One aspect of sports that has been slow to change, however, is the awareness of the impact of head injuries on young athletes.

It is still not uncommon to find coaches, athletes, and parents who urge players who have been involved in a hard hit to the head, especially if they are wearing a helmet, to just "shake off" the stars they are seeing and continue to play. Unfortunately, this can lead to permanent injury and death and many people aren't even aware of this.

Head injuries from hard hits to the head, even if the person is wearing a helmet, are fairly common. It used to be thought that athletes who suffer a whack to the head could continue to play or if they sustained a concussion that they could go home for the day and come back the next and continue playing however new research (and many tragic cases) have shown that this isn't the case.

As of July 1, 2009, the Lystedt Law went into affect in Washington State. This law now requires that any student athlete who sustains a potential

head injury or concussion be removed from play and not be allowed back on the field until cleared by a doctor.

On too many occasions, athletes have been allowed to continue playing after they sustain a head injury or concussion or they continue playing after being hit however this has led to permanent brain damage or death with two such cases taking place within the last couple of weeks in Washington state. There is no game, no sport, or no appearance on the field that is worth having to live with permanent brain damage or having to tell a parent that their child is dead because they kept playing instead of seeking medical care for what is often an invisible injury.

Concussions, especially repeated concussions, can cause long lasting, and sometimes permanent neurological damage which can affect speech, muscle coordination, thought processes, control of emotions, and other responses associated with the brain. Head injuries are also cumulative. It isn't like a broken bone that once allowed to heal actually becomes stronger at the point where the break was repaired. Each brain injury will have a cumulative affect on the person's neurological functioning, causing more and more damage no matter how much time has elapsed since the last impact.

Here's what to do if someone you care for may have sustained a head injury:

- Cease any activity immediately that could lead to another impact.
- Seek a medical evaluation immediately.
- Rest—both physically and neurologically. This means no watching TV, texting, using the computer, etc—the brain needs time to rest completely.
- Watch for signs of damage. These may be slight things that most people wouldn't notice but if the person "just isn't themselves" this is a sign.
- Go to www.biawa.org for more information on

13 Tips to Keep Seniors Safe

Falls, mostly among the elderly, are one of the leading causes of death and injury in the Northwest Region as well as Washington State. As one of the largest generations in American history moves towards their senior years, this rate is expected to increase. Here are 13 tips that will help keep the seniors in your life safer and help prevent falls:

1. Keep a regularly updated list of the medications they take and have them review this list with their doctor on a regular basis. Often times, certain medications or combinations of medications can cause light-headedness and dizziness.
2. Check their smoke detectors and remind them to change the batteries in these life-saving devices regularly.
3. Encourage them to exercise. Continued exercise throughout a person's lifetime is listed as one of the most important ways to build strength and balance and prevent falls.
4. Move things that could be tripping hazards. Throw rugs, extension cords, piles of books, and other hazards often cause falls. Simply moving or rearranging these items can prevent serious falls.
5. Stay off ladders! Falls from ladders, whether it is a simple step ladder that someone is using to reach things stored in a high cupboard or climbing up to clean out the gutters or hang Christmas lights can result in severe falls. A better idea...don't store things in cabinets that you need a ladder to reach and hire someone to do tasks around the house such as cleaning gutters or the roof.
6. Use grab bars in appropriate places. By the toilet, in the bath tub, and by the bed are common places that people can install grab bars to give them a little help with getting up and/or keeping their balance.
7. Have regular vision screenings. Problems with vision, whether it is a person's eyesight or using old prescription glasses that are no longer adequate can cause mis-steps and falls. Regular vision screenings and regularly updating prescription lenses when needed can help prevent this.
8. A hazard that many people do not recognize is their pets. Many seniors trip and fall over their pets who are underfoot. Although getting rid of the pet is probably not an option, training the pet to stay, heel, and other simple skills will help keep the pet from under foot.
9. Use mechanical safety devices. More and more technology is going into things that can keep older people safe. There are "Life Alert" type devices that someone can use to signal for help if they fall or need help, chairs that help lift a person up to a standing position, and lever locks for doors that require less dexterity for use.
10. Keep in touch. With so many ways to keep in touch with friends and family members—everything from email to cell phones, to Twitter—there should be no reason a senior falls and has to wait for help for hours or days. The simple habit of checking in regularly with the seniors in your life can help them stay connected and let you know if something is wrong, for example, if you don't hear from them at regularly scheduled times.
11. Use available senior services in your community. There are a range of services—everything from Meals on Wheels to the Access bus to senior chore services and home healthcare—that allow seniors to live on their own longer. Contact your local senior center or area agency on aging to find out what services are available in your community.
12. Go online. There are a number of websites that offer information about senior services and activities. Check out www.agingwashington.org for resources and upcoming events, go to www.activeoptions.org to find local senior exercise classes and activities, and check out the valuable falls prevention information at www.fallsfreewashington.org.
13. Take a senior driving course. Even though seniors may have been driving for decades, senior driving refresher courses offer a wealth of information about driving safely as we age. Go to www.aarp.org/families/driver_safety/ to find a course near you.

News, Info, and Other Interesting Things

- Consumer Reports is offering a new software tool called My Medication Tracker which allows people to download software on their computer (which ensures privacy) that they can then use to keep track of all medications they are taking. This can help people remember what medications they are taking, record the prices of the medications, alleviate confusion about what medication to take and when, and allows the user to print out the list to provide to their doctor or other healthcare provider. Check it out at www.consumerreports.org/health/medication-tracker/index.htm
- If you want a laugh, want to commiserate, or want to find out how to remove a wheel bearing that is stuck on a finger or use two milk jugs to practice CPR, check out www.impactnurse.com, a blog/website by an Australian nurse with some useful tips, snarky comments, and an interesting take on the nursing profession.
- Medtipster (www.medtipster.com) is a new pharmacy search engine on the web. Simply enter the drug name, dosage, and your zip code and it will list the pharmacies in your area which carry the particular prescription along with prices. This is a quick way to shop for prescription medications without going from store to store to check prices.
- Olympic College now offers Spanish courses online which are tailored for various fields. They offer Spanish courses specifically designed for people who work in a wide range of fields and are likely to encounter Spanish speaking individuals. Courses are available for health care workers, law enforcement, 911 dispatch, EMS and fire, corrections, and more. Go to www.myspanishteacher.com/olympic for more information or to register.
- Want to know what the kids in your area are thinking and doing? Everything from risky behaviors to substance abuse to exercise to social interactions were queried on the annual Healthy Youth Survey. This information is now available online and by data sets which you can access at just a click of a mouse. Go to www.askhys.net and check it out. The HYS Fact Sheet Menu will allow you to query data from the survey in many different configurations.
- The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries has an entire page on their website dedicated to firefighter safety. Everything from safety codes for the fire services to NFPA standards referenced in the WAC to health hazards for firefighters to firefighter survival are covered on the page. Check it out at www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Topics/AtoZ/firefighters/default.asp
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has 'Ten Leading Causes of Death' charts organized by year (2005, 2006, and 2007), by age, and by cause. Check out these charts (which are great for grants and presentations!) at www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/LeadingCauses.html.
- The Washington Telephone Assistance Program (WTAP) offers highly discounted phone service for low income Washington State residents and tribal members. Phone service can be had for as low as \$8 a month, installation fees and deposits can be waived, and stand-alone voice mail service is available as well for those who qualify. Get more information at www.utc.wa.gov/consumer and click on the WTAP program.
- Want to know what's going on around the world in regards to serious global incidents such as acts of terrorism, Amber Alerts, forest fires, HAZMAT situation, gang activity and H1N1 outbreaks? Check out www.globalincidentmap.com. This site provides a map of the globe with incident areas highlighted which you can then click on for further information.
- Get a quick round-up of the day's healthcare news at <http://healthcare.alltop.com/>. This site aggregates healthcare news from a number of newspapers, blogs, and websites and presents it all on one page.

Training and Education

Training Course Calendar

- October 3rd—BLS Evaluators Course in Belfair. MCFD #2 360-275-6711
- October 9th—AirLift Northwest Fall Conference. Museum of Flight in Seattle. www.airliftnw.org
- October 15th—South Central Region Pediatrics Conference in Richland, WA. 509-374-0416
- October 16th-25th—Paramedic's Refresher Course at NKFR in Kingston. 360-479-5631
- November 4th—Tacoma Trauma Conference at the Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center in Tacoma. www.tacomatraumaconference.org
- November 6th—ACLS for Experienced Providers course in Bremerton. Kitsap County EMS 360-447-2066

Northwest Region ALS OTEP

- October 1st—Jefferson County Base Station Meeting in Pt Townsend. Topic: Gastroenterology. Info: 360-385-5589
- October 1st—Kitsap County Base Station Meeting in Bremerton. Topic: Geriatric Trauma Info: 360-447-2066
- October 13th—EMS Live@Night: Topic: Infectious Disease Info: 509-232-8155
- October 15th—Mason County Base Station Meeting in Shelton. Topic: Pharmacology. Info: 360-426-1611

Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Investigation Doll Re-enactment Class Offered

The Kitsap County Child Death Review Task Force will offer a free Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Doll Re-enactment class on October 8th at the Norm Dicks Center in Bremerton. This course is designed for law enforcement and others who investigate sudden infant death cases. The class will include information on what is sudden infant death, critical information from the death scene, and hands-on practice doll re-enactments. For more information or to register, call Barb Smithson at 360-337-5250.

Save the Date!

The Northwest Region EMS Council will host a two-day Geriatrics Conference on January 23rd and 24th at the Suquamish Clearwater Resort. We have a great line up of speakers planned, interesting skills labs, and a wonderful location for this annual event.

On Sunday afternoon following the conference, there will be an SEI Workshop offered. Registration forms will be available soon on the NWREMS website at www.nwrems.org.

Post your upcoming course info here! Email aprilborbon@yahoo.com with the details.

Injury Prevention

Injury Prevention Meetings in the Northwest Region

- October 14th—Mesa Redonda de Kitsap meeting; 8:30am at the Norm Dicks Government Center. 360-440-2376.
- October 21st—Mason County Inter-Agency meeting; Noon in Shelton. 360-427-1686
- October 21st—Kitsap Child Death Review meeting. 8:30am at the Norm Dicks Center in Bremerton. 360-337-5250
- October 28th—Kitsap Suicide Prevention Task Force; 3:30pm in Bremerton. 360-337-5250

Northwest Region DUI Panels

- October 8th—Clallam County Panel in Pt Angeles at 6:30pm. 360-417-2385
- October 10th—Jefferson County Panel in Pt Townsend at 8:30am. 360-385-9153
- October 13th—Kitsap Youth Panel in Bremerton at 7pm. 360-731-5139
- October 27th—Kitsap Adult Panel in Bremerton at 7pm. 360-731-5139

Washington Traffic Fatalities Lowest Since 1955

The Washington State Patrol and Washington Traffic Safety Commission recently reported that traffic fatalities in Washington State have reached their lowest levels since 1955. In 2008, there were 522 traffic fatalities on Washington roads, the lowest level since 1955 when 461 traffic fatalities were reported. In large part, this decline is attributed to high seatbelt use rates, better engineering of both cars and roads, education, and higher save rates due to improved EMS care.

Spanish AA Update

Alcoholics Anonymous now offers a weekly AA meeting in Spanish in Kitsap County. This group meets each Wednesday from 7:30pm to 8:30pm at 904 McKenzie Avenue in downtown Bremerton. For more information contact Juan at 360-373-6313 or Debbie at 360-377-4360.

Trauma Nurses Talk Tough Day Slated for November 19th

Due to a scheduling change, Legacy Emanuel Hospital has rescheduled their 'Trauma Nurses Talk Tough' Day for November 29th in Portland, OR. The TNTT program is a multi-faceted injury prevention program which teaches educators who to use the TNTT materials to teach the public (from little kids to the elderly) about injury prevention topics ranging from helmet use and bike safety to teen driving safety and DUI prevention. This mini conference is open to all care providers who currently teach the TNTT program or would like to. Lunch is included and this is a free event so be sure to register soon. Call 503-413-4960 for information.

October Injury Prevention Events

- The 'Healthier Aging in Washington' Symposium will take place on October 15th at the Holiday Inn in SeaTac. This workshop is geared towards healthcare and public health professionals who work with aging populations and those with chronic diseases. For more information, contact Ilene Silver at ilene.silver@doh.wa.gov.
- The Kitsap County Domestic Violence Summit will take place on October 16th at Crossroads Community Church in East Bremerton. The summit will include a variety of topics and breakout sessions. Michelle Garcia of the Stalking Resource Center will be the keynote speaker. Go to www.kcdvtf.org for details.

Preparedness

Preparedness Calendar

- On October 12th there will be a region-wide Region 2 Homeland Security full scale exercise which will include participation by law enforcement, Departments of Emergency Management, fire and EMS, hospitals, the military, and others. For more information, contact Phyllis Mann at 360-307-5870.
- On October 27th and 28th, Pierce Transit will host a Critical Incident Stress Management Course at their training center in Lakewood. This crisis intervention skills training course will cover topics such as core intervention tactics, assessing the need for CISD, and essentials of group intervention. The cost for this course is \$100. Contact bcieslak@piercetransit.org for more information.
- The Washington State Department of Health is offering a two-day 'Tabletop Exercise Design for Public Health Emergencies' course on October 20th and 21st in Tumwater. This course will teach practical exercise design, design problems, presentation of the tabletop exercise, and exercise evaluation. For more information, call 360-236-4539.

Save the Date! Region 2 Hospital Prep and Healthcare Coalition Meetings Scheduled for December

- The bi-monthly Region 2 Hospital Preparedness meeting will take place on December 3rd at 10am at Harrison Medical Center in Silverdale. All hospital reps are invited to attend this meeting during which we discuss how federal grant funds will be spent to purchase disaster medical supplies and equipment for hospitals.
- The quarterly Region 2 Healthcare Coalition meeting will be held on December 3rd at 1pm at Harrison Medical Center in Silverdale. All who participate in the local Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap, and West Olympic Peninsula Healthcare Coalitions are invited to attend. At this meeting we will discuss planning efforts that are taking place at the local and regional level. We will also have an education component that will feature a guest speaker.

For more information on these regional as well as local healthcare coalition meetings and activities, contact April Borbon at 360-990-3270.

Prepare Your Staff for a Busy Flu Season

Local schools, clinics, and hospitals have already seen an uptick in flu cases. With your healthcare providers on the "front lines" of the flu fight, here are some tips to keep them healthy so that they can care for those who are sick:

- Encourage staff members to get the flu vaccines that are available.
- Be adamant about hand washing, covering your cough, and not coming to work sick in order to control the spread of the virus.
- Have providers "mask up" before they come in contact with patients who have flu-like symptoms.
- Encourage your employees to have back-up plans for child care in case their child's school closes, if their child becomes ill, if their regular child care provider becomes ill and can not care for them, or if they end up working longer than usual shifts.

Region 2 Healthcare Coalition

Healthcare Coalition Calendar

- October 1st—Region 2 Hospital Preparedness meeting. 10am at Olympic Medical Center in Pt Angeles. Info: 360-479-5631
- October 13th—Jefferson County Healthcare Coalition meeting. 1pm at Jefferson Healthcare in Pt Townsend. Info: 360-990-3270
- October 16th—Clallam County Healthcare Coalition meeting. 10am at Olympic Medical Center in Pt Angeles. Info: 360-990-3270
- October 22nd—Kitsap County Healthcare Coalition meeting. 9:30am at Harrison Medical Center in Silverdale. Info: 360-990-3270

H1N1 (Swine) Flu Resources

Get Flu Info from Your Local Health District

Each local health district and Health Officer is working to prepare their county for the H1N1 and seasonal flu season. For information on local planning efforts, clinical flu information, flu vaccinations, or to schedule a presentation for your group on flu preparedness, contact your local Health District at the number below:

- Jefferson County Health District 360-385-9400
- Clallam County Health and Human Services 360-417-2274
- Kitsap County Health District 360-337-5235

Online Flu Resources

- Kitsap County Health District's Flu Information Center
www.kitsapcountyhealth.com/h1n1/h1n1.htm
- Washington State Department of Health's H1N1/Swine Flu webpage
www.doh.wa.gov/h1n1/default.htm
- Centers for Disease Control's H1N1/Swine Flu webpage
www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/
- Centers for Disease Control's Weekly H1N1 Flu Update
www.flu.gov

H1N1 Flu "Sick Kit"

If you want to give your patients, staff, and friends a small token of your appreciation (and a visual reminder of the importance of preventing the spread of the flu) consider putting together small "sick kits" which include:

- Hand sanitizer
- A small packet of Kleenex
- A mask and gloves
- A disposable thermometer
- A packet of Tylenol and packet of Thera flu
- A packet of instant soup mix

**NORTHWEST REGION
EMERGENCY MEDICAL
SERVICES AND TRAUMA**

5610 Kitsap Way #240
Bremerton, WA 98312

PO Box 5179
Bremerton, WA 98312

Phone: 360-479-5631
Fax: 360-479-5772
Email: admin@nwrems.org

Edited by April Borbon
www.aprilborbon.com
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We're On The Web!
www.nwrems.org

The Northwest Region Emergency Medical Services and Trauma Care Council is a non-profit umbrella organization which oversees EMS training, prevention activities, and program funding in Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap and Mason Counties.

The mission of the NWREMS & TCC is to promote and support a coordinated system for local Emergency Medical Services/Trauma Care Councils by:

- *Providing resources/funding*
- *Enhancing education/training*
- *Promoting data collection/analysis*
- *Facilitating communication*
- *Promoting standardization*
- *Promoting public education and prevention*

Regional Meetings and Office Info

Local and Regional Council Meeting Schedule

- October 6th—Jefferson County EMS Council meeting in Quilcene at 7pm
- October 9th—Northwest Region Executive Board meeting at 9am in Sequim
- October 15th—Mason County EMS Council meeting in Shelton at 6pm
- October 15th—Clallam County EMS Council meeting in Pt Angeles at noon
- October 15th—West Olympic Peninsula EMS Council meeting in Forks at 7pm
- October 28th—Kitsap County EMS Council meeting in Bremerton at 9am

NWREMS Office News

- Our office will be closed on October 20th and 21st; all staff will be out of town at a conference.
- We now have a Regional Injury Prevention Committee which meets every other month in Sequim prior to the Regional Council meeting. This group will next meet on November 12th at 9:30am at the Lodge at Sherwood Village in Sequim. Anyone who is interested in participating on the Injury Prevention Committee is welcome to attend; we are particularly interested in having health district, fire district, hospital, and other provider-based injury prevention specialists participate in order to coordinate prevention efforts region wide. For more information about this committee, contact April at 360-990-3270.