

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder —Injuries & ADHD

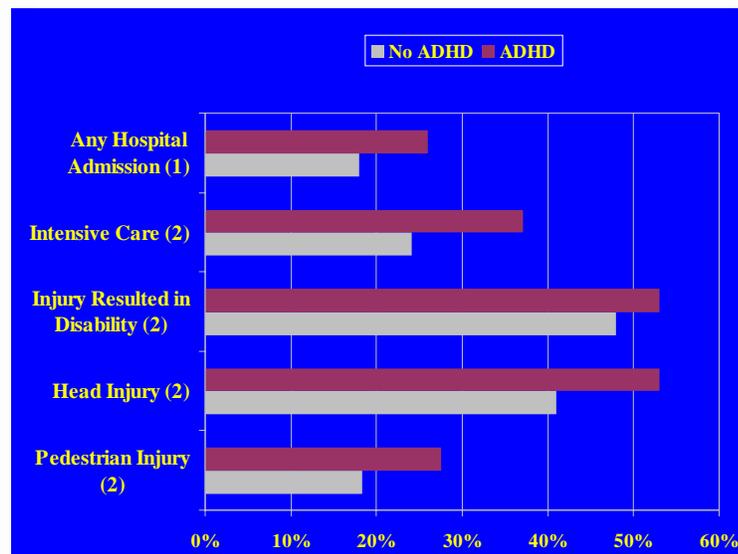


Injuries and Hospital Use in Children and Adolescents
With and Without ADHD

Children and adolescents with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) can have more frequent and severe injuries than peers without ADHD.

Research indicates that children with ADHD are significantly more likely to be injured as pedestrians or while riding a bicycle, to receive head injuries, injure more than one part of the body, and be hospitalized for accidental poisoning. Children with ADHD may be admitted to intensive care units or have an injury result in disability more frequently than other children^{1,2}.

Children with ADHD appear to have significantly higher medical costs than children without ADHD. Health care costs for each child with ADHD may be more than twice as high as medical costs for children without ADHD³.



The main traits of ADHD—inattention and impulsivity/hyperactivity—may place a person with ADHD at greater risk for certain types of accidents and injuries.

Further research is needed to understand what role ADHD symptoms play in the risk of injuries and other disorders that may occur with ADHD (comorbidities). For example, a young child with ADHD may not look for oncoming traffic while riding a bicycle or crossing the street, or may engage in high risk physical activity without thinking first of the possible consequences. For teenagers with ADHD who drive, traffic violations and motor vehicle accidents are a concern. Some research has found that drivers with ADHD have more traffic violations and accidents and may be nearly twice as likely to have their driver's licenses suspended than those without ADHD⁴.

Much of what is already known about injury prevention may be particularly useful for people with ADHD. See NCIPC for these and other injury prevention suggestions. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/about/about.htm>

- **Ensure bicycle helmet use.**
- **Remind children as often as necessary to watch for cars and to avoid unsafe activities.**
- **Supervise children when they are involved in higher-risk activities or are in more risky settings, such as when climbing or when in or around a swimming pool.**
- **Keep potentially harmful household products, tools, equipment and objects that may be used as weapons out of reach of young children.**
- **Teens with ADHD may need to limit the amount of music listened to in the car while driving, drive without passengers and/or keep the number of passengers to a chosen few, plan trips well ahead of time, avoid substance use and the use of cellular phones.**
- **Parents may want to enroll their teen in a driving safety course before their driver's license is obtained.**

1. Leibson, C., et al. Use and Costs of Medical Care for Children and Adolescents With and Without ADHD, *JAMA*, 2001, 285 (1): 60-66.

2. DiScala, C., et al. Injuries to Children With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, *Pediatrics*, 1998, 102(6): 1415-1421.

3. Guevara, J., et al. Utilization and Cost of Health Care Services for Children With Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, *Pediatrics*, 2001, 108(1): 71-78.

4. Barkley RA., et al. Driving related risks and outcomes of ADHD in adolescents and young adults, *Pediatrics*, 1993; 92(2): 212-218.