

# AMERICAN JOURNAL OF

# PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

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### Golf Cart Injuries on the Rise

San Diego, June 10, 2008 – As golf carts are used in more settings off the golf course, the number of injuries is rising. According to an article in the July 2008 issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, from 1990 until 2006, the injury rate rose more than 130 percent. During this period, nearly 150,000 golf cart-related injuries were recorded in people as young as 2 months and as old as 96 years.

Golf carts have become much faster and more powerful - some can reach 25 mph and travel over 40 miles on a single battery charge. Golf carts are now routinely used for transportation purposes at sporting events, hospitals, airports, national parks, college campuses, businesses and military bases. In many gated and retirement communities, golf carts have become the primary means of transportation. Most golf carts are not subject to federal regulation, and state and local regulations for golf carts vary widely by region.

The number of golf cart-related injuries increased steadily and significantly over the study period, from an estimated 5772 cases in 1990 to an estimated 13,411 cases in 2006, an increase of 132%. For cases in which the location of the injury was documented, the majority (70.3%) occurred at a sports or recreational facility. Injuries that occurred on the street, however, more often resulted in concussions and were more likely to require hospitalization than injuries that occurred in other locations.

Falling or jumping from a golf cart was the most common cause of injury for both adults and children (38.3%). However, children were at greater risk than adults for falls from a golf cart. Injuries caused by falls were more than twice as likely to result in injury to the head or neck, and more than six times more likely to result in concussion than injuries due to other causes.

According to investigator Lara B. McKenzie, Nationwide Children's Hospital, Center for Injury Research and Policy, Columbus, OH, "Because golf carts are not designed for the safe transportation of children, their use for transporting children should be strongly discouraged....In addition, private and public facilities that allow golf cart use can help prevent cart-related injuries by requiring driver's licenses and safety/operations training, establishing safety policies and considering golf cart safety in the design of pathways and landscapes. Given

the large increase in golf cart–related injuries over the study period, greater efforts are needed to prevent these injuries, especially among children.”

The article is “Golf Cart–Related Injuries in the U.S.” by Daniel S. Watson, BS, Tracy J. Mehan, MA, Gary A. Smith, MD, DrPH, and Lara B. McKenzie, PhD, MA. It appears in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Volume 35, Issue 1 (July 2008) published by Elsevier.

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Full text of the article is available upon request; contact [eAJPM@ucsd.edu](mailto:eAJPM@ucsd.edu) to obtain copies. To schedule an interview, please contact Mary Ellen Fiorino, Media Relations Specialist, Marketing and Public Relations, Nationwide Children’s Hospital, telephone 614-355-0492, fax 614-355-0480, E-mail [MaryEllen.Fiorino@NationwideChildrens.org](mailto:MaryEllen.Fiorino@NationwideChildrens.org).

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