

NEWS RELEASE

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National Study Finds Youth Baseball-Related Injuries Down 25 Percent

Despite the decrease, additional opportunities for injury prevention remain

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)— Spring marks baseball season for more than 19 million children and adolescents who play each year as part of a team or in backyards throughout the United States. The good news for these players is that the number of injuries from the sport is on the decline. A new study by the Center for Injury Research and Policy of The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital found that the number of children and adolescents treated for baseball-related injuries in hospital emergency departments decreased 25 percent from 1994 through 2006 – going from an estimated 147,000 injuries in 1994 to approximately 111,000 injuries in 2006. This is the first national study of youth baseball injuries requiring emergency treatment, and is now available online in the June electronic issue of *Pediatrics*.

“Although baseball injuries have declined, the consistently high numbers of injuries requiring emergency treatment highlight the importance of increasing our prevention efforts,” said study co-author Gary Smith, MD, DrPH, director of the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital, and an associate professor of pediatrics at The Ohio State University College of Medicine.

According to the study, being hit by the baseball was the most common mechanism of injury (46 percent of injuries), followed by being hit with the bat (25 percent). The most common types of injuries were soft tissue injuries (34 percent) followed by fractures and dislocations (20 percent). The face (34 percent) and the upper extremities (32 percent) were the most commonly injured body regions.

One possible reason for the decrease in injuries may be the greater use of protective equipment. “Safety equipment such as age-appropriate breakaway bases, helmets with properly-fitted face shields, mouth guards and reduced-impact safety baseballs have all been shown to reduce injuries,” said Dr. Smith. “As more youth leagues, coaches and parents ensure the use of these types of safety equipment in both practices and games, the number of baseball-related injuries should continue to decrease. Mouth guards, in particular, should be more widely used in youth baseball.”

Data for this study were collected from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), which is operated by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The NEISS dataset provides information on consumer product-related and sports and recreation-related injuries treated in hospital emergency departments across the country.

The Center for Injury Research and Policy (CIRP) works globally to reduce injury-related pediatric death and disabilities. With innovative research at its core, CIRP works to continually improve the scientific understanding of the epidemiology, biomechanics, prevention, acute treatment and rehabilitation of injuries. CIRP serves as a pioneer by translating cutting edge injury research into education, advocacy and advances in clinical care. In 2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) designated the Center for Injury Research and Policy as one of the 13 Injury Control Research Centers (ICRCs) in the United States. It is the only ICRC to focus primarily on pediatric and adolescent injuries. Learn more about the Center for Injury Research and Policy at <http://www.injurycenter.org>.