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## Golf cart-related injuries on the rise, study says

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You won't see Tiger Woods riding around in a golf cart at the [U.S. Open](#) this weekend, even though he is competing for the first time following knee surgery a few weeks ago.

And while his knee might hurt by the final round on Sunday, Tiger may be safer walking than riding, according to a [new study on golf cart-related injuries](#) published in the July issue of the [American Journal of Preventive Medicine](#).

According to the study, there were an estimated 148,000 golf cart-related injuries between 1990 and 2006, ranging from an estimated 5,770 cases in 1990 to approximately 13,411 cases in 2006.

A couple of reasons for the rise in injuries is that golf carts have become faster and more powerful and are no longer limited to use on the golf course, according to the study. In addition to their traditional role, golf carts are now routinely being used at sporting events, hospitals, airports, national parks, college campuses, business parks and military bases.



While the study found that the majority of golf cart-related injuries (more than 70 percent) took place at sports or recreational facilities, individuals injured in carts on the street had an increased risk of concussions and were more likely to require hospitalization than individuals injured in other locations. Colliding with another vehicle or stationary object accounted for almost 10 percent of the injuries.

The most common cause of injury for all ages was falling or jumping from the cart, but even more so among children, according to the study. More than 30 percent of golf cart-related injuries involved children under the age of 16.

"Children are even more likely than adults to fall from the golf cart, and these falls are associated with higher rates of head and neck injuries and hospitalizations. Greater efforts are needed to prevent these injuries," said study co-author Gary Smith, director of the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio.

The study recommends more effective safety features, such as improved passenger restraints and four-wheel brakes, in combination with training programs and safety policies to reduce the overall number of golf cart-related injuries.

"Following a few safety precautions, such as driving at a reasonable speed, wearing seat belts when they are available, braking slowly and considering the terrain and weather conditions can reduce the potential for injuries," said study co-author Tracy Mehan, a research associate in the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's.

Facilities where golf carts are used can also help prevent golf cart-related injuries by establishing safety policies, requiring driver's licenses and operator training and considering safety when designing the pathways the golf carts will be using.

Data for the 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 in the U.S.

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