

Amusement Park Safety

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July 14, 2014 – Everyone loves to go to the amusement park! They have all kinds of entertainment for the entire family to enjoy – from air shows and acrobatic shows, to music, parades, rides, contests – and even carnival games.

When was the last time you enjoyed a foot-long corn dog or pink cotton candy? Chances are it was at an amusement park.

Amusement rides seem to be more thrilling than the year before. They're designed to put a smile on your face as you utter a high-pitched shriek while you get twisted, flipped, plunged and spun upside down and around – and amazingly enough, you stay in your seat, keep your lunch down – and you feel rejuvenated and happy!

Here are a few precautionary measures you can take to ensure your children's safety on the rides at the fair!

- ➔ The height requirement on the amusement rides is designed to screen out children that are too young to handle the intensity of the ride and who do not possess the muscular strength required to sustain the jolts and forces. If your child is tall for his/her age, please take this into consideration as well as the fact that your child may have an indifferent reaction to the 'thrill' factor. Nobody knows your child's abilities, impulsive behaviour and reactions better than you. It is inevitable that you will come across some rides that will not be suitable for your child.
- ➔ If your child is lean and tall ensure that the lap or grab bar secures your child to the seat and that he/she feels safe.
- ➔ Ensure that your child understands the instructions for the ride by having them repeat the instructions back to you, i.e. stay seated, hold on to the lap or grab bar, keep your feet and knees inside the car, smile, have fun, etc.
- ➔ Teach your children to listen to the operators and follow their instructions. Do not get on or off a ride until the ride operator has given you the okay.



- Children encourage other children to act up. Teach your children not to engage in risky behaviour while they are on the ride.
- Before allowing your child on a ride, it's a good idea to let them observe the ride and other children's reactions. If they are the slightest ambivalent to go on the ride encourage them to see another ride.

- As a preventative choking measure, do not allow your child to chew gum while on a ride.
- Some rides require adult supervision. If you are not supervising your child, ensure that the person you choose to supervise your child is mature, aptly responsible and able to handle any incident or negative reaction, should one occur. It is also a good idea that your child is very familiar with the person that you choose to supervise your child so that he/she will feel more secure and therefore have a positive and happy experience.



- The operator's responsibility is to make sure that all the children on the ride are safe. Should the operator feel that your child is too small for a ride take your child aside and explain to him/her the importance of being safe rather than sorry. Encourage your child to go to another ride that is more appropriate.
- Do not allow a child to dictate what ride they want to go on especially if you know that they are not physically or emotionally equipped for the challenges that the ride will expose them to and the negative incidences that may arise. It is the parent's responsibility to guide their children towards the appropriate rides for their height and weight.
- Notify the ride operator immediately if you notice something wrong on the ride, i.e. a lap bar that does not latch properly, a broken restraint, or if your child, once seated, is uneasy and motions to get off the ride.
- Teach your children not to crowd children who are exiting the ride when they are getting on the ride.
- If you are not sure that an operator is doing his /her job properly, notify management immediately.
- Teach your children to never walk into a restricted area at an amusement park. Don't climb or hop fences or walk through 'Employee Only' gates. If you drop a hat or other item that falls into a restricted area underneath a ride, ask a park employee for assistance.
- Before allowing your children to participate on a bouncy castle or any other type of inflatable, make sure the tethers are properly secured to the ground in order to prevent children from sprains, fractures and other injuries.
- Ensure that the inflatable is appropriately supervised.



- ➡ Be very cautious about letting your children ride on neighbourhood carnival rides that make creaky sounds or look run down. If a ride's appearance makes you uncomfortable, follow your instinct and don't hesitate in declining to put your children on the ride. Safety first!
- ➡ Make sure every amusement ride, whether at a fair, shopping mall or restaurant, has the appropriate child restraint or seat belt.
- ➡ Make sure your children are always aware of where you are, and who is around them.
- ➡ Do not let your children out of your sight to buy snacks.
- ➡ Always accompany your children in the rest rooms.

Before You Leave Home...

- ➡ Put sunscreen and summer hats on your children before you leave for the amusement park.
- ➡ Keep your children well hydrated.
- ➡ Assist your children in choosing their outfit for the day. Long fringes, ties or any decorative clothing item that can catch on mechanisms of a ride are very dangerous. Encourage your children to wear light coloured, cotton clothing for maximum comfort from the heat. Being at an amusement park all day can be a long adventure so it's a good idea for your children to wear comfortable running shoes and clean, dry socks.
- ➡ Pack a few first aid supplies with you, such as adhesive bandages, anti-bacterial cream and wipes to treat minor cuts and scrapes.
- ➡ Take a digital photo of each child the same day you are going to the amusement park. Should one of your children get lost at the park, you will have the most recent photo (wearing the same clothes) and therefore it will be much easier for park security to locate your child.
- ➡ As a proactive measure, it's a good idea to place a covered ID tag that contains all the pertinent contact information (including your cell telephone number) into your child's pocket.



Before You Start Your Amusement Adventure in the Park...

- ➡ Talk to your family about a game plan if someone gets lost. It is easy to become separated from your children



especially in large, crowded amusement park settings. Establish an easy-to-see place for each area of the park. Walk with your children to the meeting place so they have a strong visual sense of location.

- ➡ Direct your children's attention to recognize employees and park security. Make sure they know not to leave the established meeting site for any reason. A park employee or security guard will be willing to wait with your child at a designated place if you and your child become separated. Some larger parks have 'lost children' centres.
- ➡ Children need to understand how important it is to remain close to their parent's side and within plain sight. No exceptions. Parents and guardians should discuss this plan with children prior to any public excursion along with an understanding of any consequences. Child abductions occur every day and often while an adult caregiver is nearby.
- ➡ Start the day off by locating the park's information centres in advance so you can point them out to your children in case of an emergency. It's also a good idea to locate the first aid and baby-care centres.
- ➡ Tie a balloon with a colourful ribbon to your stroller so it is easily distinguishable from all the other strollers.
- ➡ Most large amusement parks have walk-in clinics and/or first-aid stations. Check the map so you'll know where to go if you need help.

OK, now that everyone knows the rules and agrees to the safety measures – let's go and have some fun!!

