



Children's Health
Education Center™

A member of Children's Hospital and Health System.



Safe Kids
Wisconsin
LEAD AGENCY: CHILDREN'S
HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER

Ice-skating safety

To learn more about keeping your family safe, contact Safe Kids Wisconsin:

(715) 843-1890

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This winter, 18,500 children will visit the emergency room with injuries received while ice-skating and playing hockey.

Skating can be both very rewarding and frustrating. There is nothing like the challenge of strapping on a pair of skates and heading out to the ice to either chase a puck around the rink or do a few figure eights. But with both ice-skating and hockey, it is never a matter of *will* your child fall, rather, *how many times* your child will fall.

Whether your child skates at an indoor rink or outdoors, follow and promote these safety tips to ensure that he or she avoids injuries and leaves the ice with nothing but fond memories.

Protect your child with tips for safe skating

- **Always supervise your child** while he or she is skating.
- **Take lessons.**
- **Wear protective gear** including a helmet,* wrist guards and knee pads.
- **Dress your child appropriately** in comfortable, layered clothing to protect him or her from cold. Secure loose articles of clothing such as scarves so they don't catch on a skate and cause a fall.
- **Check your child's skates** for a proper fit – they should fit snugly, be laced at top, and the laces should be tucked in.
- **Instruct your child to skate in the direction of the crowd.**
- **Warn your child** not to dart across the ice, which can cause a collision.
- **Teach your child how to monitor the skating traffic**, and give himself or herself plenty of room on the ice.
- **Promote fair play**, no pushing or shoving.
- **Insist that your child not chew gum or eat candy** while skating as it can pose a serious choking hazard.
- **If skating outdoors, wear sunscreen** with an SPF of 15 or higher.



Safe Kids Wisconsin is a member of Safe Kids USA.

*Although a helmet has not yet been designed for ice skating, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that wearing a helmet is preferable to wearing no helmet at all. It lists three types of helmets that can be used: bicycle, multi-sport and ski helmets. For more information, go to www.cpsc.gov.

Protect your child with a safe place to skate

- **Skate only in designated skating areas** as identified by your local police, community and/or park and recreation department.
- **Look for posted signs** about the condition of the ice.
- **Avoid skating during or after warm weather.**
Ice may seem strong, but can buckle even under the weight of a child.
- **Avoid skating on rivers.**
River currents do not allow a strong ice bond to form.
- **Always skate during the day or in well-lit areas at night.**

Protect your child who plays hockey

- **Purchase an approved hockey helmet** with foam lining and full face mask for your child to wear.
- **Other protective gear also should be worn**, including a mouth guard, shoulder, knee, elbow, shin, hip, and tendon pads, padded hockey pants, neck guard, athletic supporter, gloves and safety glasses.
- **Make sure all equipment fits properly.**
- **Insist that your child warms up and stretches before playing.**
- **Teach your child to avoid head contact** with the boards or other players.
- Limit or prohibit body checking.

Protect your child from the cold

- **Dress your child in several layers of protective waterproof or water-resistant clothing.** A layer of clothing that wicks away moisture from the body also is recommended.
- **Be sure to cover all exposed areas**, including the head, ears, hands and neck. Secure loose clothing so it does not get caught in play gear.
- Children can work up a sweat while playing outside, even in the cold, which can lead to wet clothes and heat loss. Have extra clothing to change into.
- **Have your children take regular breaks** from the outdoors to warm up and rest. Keep your kids' bodies energized with healthy snacks and avoid dehydration by having them drink plenty of water. Injuries are more likely to occur when children are tired.
- **Set reasonable time limits** for outdoor play. Younger children are more susceptible to the cold.
- **In severe cold weather, keep your children indoors** unless you absolutely must go out. Limit the time spent outside and dress appropriately, be prepared for emergencies.

Color me!

