

PLAY IT COOL THIS SUMMER: NATIONAL TRAUMA INSTITUTE OFFERS SAFETY TIPS FOR FAMILIES DURING A FUN YET DANGEROUS SEASON

San Antonio, Tex. (June 7, 2011) – As final school bells ring and families put the finishing touches on vacation itineraries, emergency rooms are preparing for “trauma season” in a very different way. The National Trauma Institute (NTI), a nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing death and disability related to trauma injury, warns the best laid summer plans and activities can often lead to serious injury and death related to preventable accidents.

Traumatic injury is the leading cause of death for people between the ages of 1 and 44, and accounts for more than 37 million emergency department visits each year. The number of emergency room admissions across the country will spike this summer from trauma-related incidents including motor vehicle crashes, bike accidents, falls, near-drownings and other hazards related to summertime activities.

“Someone in the U.S. dies every three minutes from traumatic injury,” said Sharon Smith, executive director of NTI. “Our country and world have already witnessed massive amounts of devastation and injury this year from natural disasters beyond anyone’s control. It’s crucial to keep ourselves and our children safe using common sense and simple measures to prevent injury whenever possible.”

NTI offers the following tips to keep you and your family out of harm’s way this summer and all year round:

- **Make auto safety a priority.** Always avoid texting or cell phone use while driving, properly attach car seats for children and map out routes ahead of time. Program a dashboard GPS unit, or if necessary, pull the car over to a safe place before consulting a map.
- **Keep a well-stocked first aid kit in your home and car.** Not every injury qualifies as a traumatic one, of course, but untreated bleeding can make a moderate injury much worse. A well-stocked first aid kit will help you address everything from cuts to more severe injuries.
- **Keep fire extinguishers in and around the house.** In a multi-story home, there should be one on each floor, or at least near the kitchen and master bedroom. For outdoor grills, BBQs and bonfire pits, keep a fire extinguisher and/or hose attached to an outdoor faucet nearby.

- **Wear protective equipment and safety gear at all times.** Adults and children alike should always wear helmets, elbow and knee pads when biking, skating and riding on motorcycles or all-terrain vehicles (ATVs).
- **Always use caution in the water.** Keep enough life jackets on board a boat for every passenger. Never leave children alone in the water, and only swim in designated areas of a beach supervised by a lifeguard.
- **Keep cell phone chargers in your car, home and office.** A properly charged cell phone is a lifeline in the event of serious injury. Getting qualified first responders to the scene in a timely manner can literally be the difference between life and death.
- **Know where the closest trauma center is.** Only certain hospitals around the country have the resources to be a designated trauma center. Locate an accredited facility near you at <http://www.facs.org/trauma/verified.html>.