

## Wellness Articles

Attached are weekly health and wellness articles provided by Alberta Health Services. As a way to help all Albertans live a healthy life, we welcome and encourage weekly newspapers, community newsletters and other publications to reproduce this information free of charge. Credit to Alberta Health Services or the identified content provider would be appreciated.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: [Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca). You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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## ATVs: Be as Safe as Possible

It's Child Safety Week and Alberta Health Services (AHS) is reminding all Albertans to make all-terrain vehicle (ATV) safety a priority this week and every week.

ATVs pose significant risk to all users and particularly children less than 16 years of age, who have not yet developed to the point of having the strength, skills or judgment needed to operate an ATV. Over a one-year period ending April 1, 2017, 78 children were seen in Alberta's two pediatric emergency departments due to ATV-related injuries; 31 required hospital admission and one died.

To protect children less than 16 years of age, parents and caregivers are advised to ensure these children do not drive or ride in an ATV. This includes ATVs marketed as 'child-sized'. Albertans **16 years of age and older** are urged to take the following precautions to ensure their ATV excursions are as safe as possible:

- **Get trained:** Before you hit the trails, get formal hands-on training from a recognized/trained ATV instructor. Don't be shy about refreshing your training seasonally.
- **Wear the gear:** Always wear a helmet. As of May 15, 2017, CSA-compliant helmets must be worn by OHV users when riding on public land, but a helmet worn every ride can save your life. From 2002 to 2013, 41 per cent of quad-rider deaths in Alberta were due to head injuries. In 80 per cent of these head injury deaths, the quad riders were not wearing a helmet. In addition to a helmet, always wear a jacket, long pants, goggles, boots and gloves.
- **Look first:** Be sure you're aware of the weather forecast, fire outlook/potential, and any hazards (geographical, animal or human) or risks that the trail(s) could pose. Ensure your ATV is equipped with an appropriate head lamp.



- **Buckle up:** Be sure you're fastened in properly and that all gear and equipment (including your ATV restraints) are in proper working condition before you hit the trails.
- **Drive sober:** Don't drink or do drugs before or while operating an ATV: 55 per cent of those who died in ATV crashes between 2002 and 2013 tested positive for alcohol.
- **Seek help:** Before you head out on the trail, let others know where you're going and when they should expect you back. This helps your loved ones know when to call for help if you've been gone too long. Take a cellphone or working radio with you, as well as a first aid-kit.

Visit [www.ahs.ca/injuryprevention.asp](http://www.ahs.ca/injuryprevention.asp) for more information on ATV safety and injury prevention.