



Lawn Mowing Is Not Child's Play

July 30 2020 10:20 AM

SPRINGFIELD - Although we are over halfway through the summer, there are a few months where lawns will need mowing. While mowing is a seemingly innocuous activity, the HSHS Illinois hospitals of HSHS St. John's Hospital in Springfield; HSHS St. Mary's Hospital in Decatur; HSHS St. Francis Hospital in Litchfield; HSHS Good Shepherd Hospital in Shelbyville; HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital in O'Fallon, HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital in Effingham; HSHS Holy Family Hospital in Greenville, and HSHS St. Joseph's Hospitals in Breese and Highland want to remind everyone to remain safety-minded when mowing.

Thirteen children, on average, receive emergency medical treatment every day for a lawnmower-related injury in the United States, according to the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission. More than 86,000 adults are treated in an ER each year for lacerations, partial amputations and eye damage while cutting the grass.

HSHS Illinois Chief Physician Executive Dr. Gurpreet Mander says injuries most commonly happen when people bypass the safety mechanisms on machinery. "Whether it's a push or riding mower, trimmer or tractor, the safety features are there for a reason," said Dr. Mander. "People often try to quickly clear out grass near the blade, or rush to get the job done and that's when accidents happen."

HSHS Illinois experts have five safety recommendations that will help protect you from head to toe this mowing season:

1. **Wear eye protection.** Debris often kicks up from behind mowers and trimmers - at up to 200 miles per hour, which can damage your eyes. Low hanging tree branches should also be trimmed regularly to prevent eye injuries. Safety goggles are recommended; don't rely on everyday eyeglasses.
2. **Shut off equipment.** This should be the first thing you do when you stop to empty the bagger, before you walk away from the machine, when you fill the gas tank - or before you unplug the device if it's electric - and before you reach toward the blade or engine.

3. **Watch out for kids.** It's best to keep children and pets inside while using machinery. It only takes one second for clothing, toys and hair to get caught in moving parts. Riding lawn mowers are designed for one person. Never let kids under 16 run a rider or children younger than 12 operate a push mower.
4. **Let the mower cool down before refilling the gas tank.** Exhaust from a lawn mower can reach 240 degrees Fahrenheit which can cause severe burns to hands and arms and hot splashes into your eyes from the new gas pouring onto the existing hot gasoline.
5. **Wear closed-toe shoes.** It is easy for a spinning blade to sever toes. Also, sandals and flip flops are less stable. A trip, slip or stumble could cause you to come into contact with moving or hot parts.

Dr. Mander says if you experience a laceration, control the bleeding with pressure and a towel, and get to an emergency room immediately or call 911. If there is an amputation, and any part of the appendage is salvageable, wrap it with a clean cloth or gauze, place it in a bag with ice and bring it with you to the emergency room or give it to the paramedics who respond to your 911 call.

Community members should never delay or forgo emergency care, even as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect our communities. At each HSHS Illinois hospital, their emergency departments are well-prepared to deliver high-quality emergency medical care 24/7, in the safest way possible.