

# Lawn Mower Safety This Summer

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O'FALLON, IL – Each year thousands of individuals are injured while mowing the lawn. These injuries can be as simple as a first degree burn to something as tragic as an amputation or even death. HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital urges the public to use caution while mowing, especially when children are involved.

Prevention of these injuries is key, as the most common injuries could be prevented by just slowing down and being aware of your surroundings.

The types of injuries sustained while mowing the lawn vary greatly. Some of the most common injuries are:

- **Cuts:** Cuts can occur anywhere on the body but most often occur on the hands and feet from the sharp blades. Small wounds or cuts can harbor unsafe bacteria. Infections are common, and antibiotic medicines usually are necessary.
- **Burns:** The hot engine, gas tank or exhaust of a lawn mower can cause burns.
- **Missile Injuries:** A variety of injuries may be caused by items, such as wires or loose objects in the lawn, being thrown from the spinning blades.
- **Fractures:** The rotating blades of a mower can cause broken bones if you come in contact with them
- **Amputations:** The sharp blades of a mower can amputate part of an arm, leg, hand or foot. Burns, cuts and fractures can be so severe that the injured part of the body requires amputation to prevent infection and further complications.

If you suffer a lawn mower injury it is important you seek treatment right away. Even seemingly small injuries such as minor cuts can harbor bacteria and potentially cause a bigger problem.

The easier solution is to do your best to avoid injury in the first place. Check out some of these prevention tips.

- Read your mower's instruction manual prior to use.
- Keep your mower in good working order with sharp blades. Only use a mower that has protection over hot and sharp parts.
- Pick up potential flying objects, such as stones, toys and debris, before you start mowing.
- Wear goggles, hearing protection, gloves and long pants. Always wear sturdy close-toed shoes while mowing the lawn.
- Do not drink alcohol or use other substances before or while using your lawn mower.
- Do not remove safety devices or guards on switches.
- Never insert hands or feet into the mower to remove grass or debris.
- Never lift a mower by the bottom for transport; the blades can cut fingers even if they are not moving.
- Never cut grass when it is wet or damp.
- Never allow children under age 12 to operate a push mower or those under 16 to drive a riding mower. Keep children off the lawn while mowing, and never have a passenger on your riding mower, especially a child.
- Do not pull a mower backward or ride it in reverse unless necessary.

To learn more, visit <https://www.assh.org/handcare/safety/lawn-mower>.