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For immediate release

Injury increases for teens

Over the past five years injuries to teens and pre-teens have steadily increased. As children mature, so to do their physical and cognitive abilities, however it is important to remember that children, including teens and pre-teens are not just small adults.

New data released by Kidsafe WA, with the support of the Western Australian Department of Health shows an average of 6,500 teens and pre-teens present to the Princess Margaret Hospital Emergency Department (PMH ED) with an injury every year.

While young children aged 0 to 4 years account for the highest number of injuries, the proportion of injuries to this age group has decreased from 42% to 38% over the same five year period.

Key findings from the Kidsafe WA Childhood Injury Bulletin: Injuries to Teens and Pre-teens show:

- Teens and pre-teens aged between 10-15 years account for a third of all injuries.
- Males are at greater risk of sustaining an injury and record consistently higher numbers in comparison to females across all ages.
- Just under half of all injuries are sports-related.
- Australian Rules football, soccer and basketball are the most common sporting activities associated with injury to this age group.
- Over half of injuries are caused by either a blunt force or a fall.
- Just under 93% of injuries are unintentional.

“Learning to make decisions and assess risks are important parts of growing up, however it is often difficult to find the right balance between allowing children to make their own choices and enforcing rules to keep them safe from serious injury,” said Kidsafe WA Chief Executive Officer, Scott Phillips.

Many injuries to teens and pre-teens occur during sporting activities or on our roads. Road related injuries can be as a cyclist or pedestrian, either on foot or when using small wheeled devices such as skateboards and scooters.

When playing sport, wearing appropriate protective equipment, adhering to rule modifications, proper warm up and cool down and drinking water to stay hydrated can reduce the risk of injury. Similarly, to prevent injuries when on the road, children should wear a helmet that meets Australian Standards, bright coloured clothing and avoiding distractions such as mobile phones and loud music.

For more information on how to keep your children safe visit: www.kidsafewa.com.au

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