

# **Temiskaming Hospital**

February 8, 2008

## **All-Terrain Vehicles: Safety Tips for Families**

The fall and early winter is a great time to get outside and enjoy our trails and backcountry. Many families include ATVs as part of experience. In Canada, nearly 25% of ATV-related deaths are among children under 15 years of age. Of those seriously injured on ATVs, nearly one third are children under 16.

To properly handle an ATV takes a lot of physical strength and good coordination. The Canadian ATV industry has endorsed a voluntary standard, which recommends that children less than 12 should not ride an ATV greater than 70cc. Many families however, have full sized 700cc ATVs that may weigh as much as 600 lbs. Most kids do not have the mass, strength, or coordination to properly control such a large vehicle.

The Canadian Pediatric Society has reviewed information collected from Canadian hospitals relating to emergency room visits and hospitalizations for kids injured on ATVs. They have concluded that children under 16 years of age should not operate an ATV due to their lack of strength, skill and experience. They also recommend that kids should never be passengers on an ATV since they can affect the balance and make it hard for the driver to stay in control.

The good news is that since producing this statement, there have been advances in special adapted extension seats that may help fix this problem. If your ATV does not have one of these seats however, then it is not properly equipped for passengers. All riders should wear helmets, stay off public roads, and be well trained in their use.

The Canada Safety Council has an ATV Rider's Course that offers training for all ATV operators. If you would like to see more on this topic from the Canadian Pediatric Society, go to their website at [www.caringforkids.ca](http://www.caringforkids.ca).



Temiskaming Hospital  
(705) 647-8121  
[www.temiskaming-hospital.com](http://www.temiskaming-hospital.com)

### Visiting Hours:

- 1000 to 2000 hours for medical patients, surgical patients and Long-Term Care patients;
- 1400 to 1600 hours and 1800 to 2000 hours for obstetrics;
- Visitors to the Special Care Unit (SCU) are restricted to immediate family and/or significant other(s).