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For Immediate Release:

Ball Memorial Hospital and Riley Hospital for Children urges community to prevent lawn mower injuries

Annually, more than 9,000 children injured nationwide

MUNCIE-Lawn mowers are often associated with the scent of fresh cut grass and thoughts of a beautiful summer day, but few associate lawn mowers with facial injuries, amputations or even fatalities.

“Negligent use of lawn mowing equipment results in devastating injuries annually, and these injuries could be avoided if simple safety precautions were used,” says Craig Hughes M.D., a Pediatrician with the CHS Pediatrics Center, and Ball Memorial Hospital.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, each year approximately 9,000 children under the age of 18 are injured by power lawn mowers nationwide; and every summer, Hoosiers are victims of these preventable injuries and deaths.

From 2003-2006, the most recent data available from the Indiana State Department of Health, 37 percent of all power lawn-mower related injuries in the state involved the hospitalization of children under the age of 15.

“Adults have the ultimate responsibility in preventing injuries among children with lawn mowing equipment,” Dr. Hughes added. “Adults should never allow children to ride on their lap when operating a riding mower, or leave a running lawn mower unattended. By simply thinking about safety, the amount of devastating injuries to children could be eliminated.”

“While operating any type of power equipment or machinery, safety practices need to be utilized regularly. It’s a good idea for adults to play it safe around mowing equipment, and never allow children in the yard while operating push and riding lawn mowers,” he said.

Ball Memorial Hospital and Riley Hospital for Children wants the public to be aware of the dangers of power lawn mowers and provide tips on lawn mower safety.

Types of lawn mower injuries

- Amputation of body parts (fingers, toes, arms or legs)
- Deep cuts, damaging skin, muscle and bone
- Fractures of hand, feet, arms or legs
- Head, facial and eye injuries
- Burns from hot mower parts

Lawn mower safety tips

- Never allow a child under the age of 12 to operate a push or riding lawn mower, or a tractor pulling a brush mower.
- Never allow a child to ride on the lap of driver, the seat, fender or housing of a riding mower or a tractor pulling a brush mower.
- Read the operator's manual.
- Never leave a power mower unattended while the engine is running.
- Protect against flying objects by keeping children more than 50 feet (15 meters) away from the operating mower.
- **NEVER** allow a child in the yard of a riding lawn mower, the unknown child in the yard becomes the back-over maimed child

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