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*"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"*

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## Horseback Riding Injuries

Horseback riding is one of the oldest and most popular sports in our town. It has been estimated that 30 million Americans will ride horses annually. Each year, thousands of these people are treated in hospital emergency rooms due to horseback riding injuries.

The "Physician and Sportsmedicine" journal recently studied horseback riding related injuries and found that most if these injuries occurred while riders were mounted and performing non-jumping activities. Most commonly, the cause of the injury was falling off the horse, followed by being kicked or stepped on. The researchers also noted that the arms were the most common sites of injury, followed by the legs, neck or back, and head.

With these results in mind, it is apparent that riders of all ages should use caution when riding. Parents and health professionals should promote rider safety and the use of certified helmets in order to prevent serious head injuries.

Any experienced rider will tell you that when you fall off a 1000-lb horse traveling at 30 mph, the potential risk for multiple injuries is very high. All riders should be aware that a helmet would decrease the severity of a head injury. In addition to head injuries, the incidence of neck or back strain is also very high. So, after a recent riding fall, be sure that your neck, back and extremities are examined.

As with many other sports, one must take precautions to avoid the possibility of injury. Horse enthusiasts should use caution when riding and be sure to wear helmets.