

Buckle up your child in your SUV

Question: Is it true that SUVs are safer for children than regular vehicles when it comes to accidents?

Answer: The answer is no, and not only are they not safer but may be more dangerous. It is a misconception that SUVs are safer family vehicles than standard passenger cars. This was proven in a recent study that reviewed a sample of 3,922 child occupants, 0 to 15 years of age. Injuries were defined as concussions and other brain injuries, spinal injuries, facial fractures and laceration, internal organ injuries, extremity fractures, and scalp lacerations. These are not injuries seen in our typical patients. Considerations were calculated on child seating positions, restraint use, vehicle weight, exposure of the child to passenger airbags, and whether the vehicle rolled over.

The results were quite astounding. Among the children in the study, those restrained appropriately were less likely to be injured (75-percent less) and those in the front seat were more likely to be injured (106-percent more).

In both vehicle types, children exposed to a passenger airbag were more likely to be injured than those who were not (370 percent).

Rollover crashes increased the risk of injury in both vehicle types (increased by 229 percent) and occurred more than twice as frequently with SUVs compared with passenger cars. Especially detrimental for children in SUVs was being unrestrained versus restrained in a rollover crash (2,400-percent increased risk). WOW! Look at these numbers. If you have an SUV, make sure your children are properly restrained.

Despite the greater vehicle weight of SUVs, the risk of injury for children in SUVs is similar to that of children in passenger cars.

The potential advantage offered by heavier SUVs seems to be offset by other factors, including an increased tendency to roll over.

Age-appropriate child restraint and rear seat positioning are important, particularly for children in the SUVs, given the very high risk of injury for children restrained inappropriately in rollover crashes.

Any accident at all in any vehicle should not be ignored. Even the mildest fender bender can cause serious injury, even if symptoms are not evident immediately. Chiropractors are experts in examining your child's spine should you be in an auto accident. Get yourself and your children checked immediately and don't procrastinate.

Quote of the week: *"What's done to children, they will do to society."* – Karl Menninger