



## Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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*Third in a series of five.*

### **State to promote safety during National Public Health Week, April 4–10**

*Day three — Safety at Play — Traumatic brain injury*

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA — The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services is placing special emphasis on safety during National Public Health Week, April 4–10. This year's theme is *Safety is No Accident*. Unintentional injuries — such as motor vehicle crashes, traumatic brain injury and falls — rank among the 10 leading causes of hospitalizations in Alaska.

A different aspect of injury prevention is highlighted each day throughout the week.

For Wednesday, April 6, our focus is safety at play — specifically avoiding traumatic brain injury.

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) results in hospitalization or death for an average of 800 Alaskans every year. An estimated 3,000 Alaskans visit emergency rooms or acute care centers annually with mild head/brain injuries. Alaska's traumatic brain injury rates are 28 percent higher than the national average.

Traumatic brain injuries are most often caused by falls, but also are often the result of injuries received while on snowmachines or ATVs, biking, or other sports.

The highest rates of traumatic brain injury are among rural Alaska Native youth age 15–19 in motor vehicle crashes (including ATVs and snowmachines).

The two best ways to avoid traumatic brain injury are by wearing a seat belt every time you're in the car and by wearing a helmet when you:

- ride a bike, motorcycle, snowmachine, scooter, horse, or all-terrain vehicle;
- ski or snowboard;
- play a contact sport, such as football, ice hockey, or boxing;
- use in-line skates or ride a skateboard; or
- are at bat and running bases in baseball or softball.

For more information on traumatic brain injury: <http://www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury/>.

For more safety ideas go to our state injury prevention website:  
[http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/injury\\_prevention/](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/injury_prevention/).

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