

If you ride an e-scooter, take safety precautions

June 17 2021



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As pandemic restrictions begin to loosen around the country and summer temperatures rise, more people will be moving about on public rideshare electric scooters. With that comes this warning: Ride with safety.

A Henry Ford Health System study published in *The Laryngoscope*, shows that head and neck injuries caused by use of e-scooters have been on the rise since rideshare systems were introduced to the public in late 2017.

Kathleen Yaremchuk, M.D., Chair of the Department of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery and the study's senior author, said that a review of emergency visits in the last three years showed [e-scooter](#) injuries have increased significantly with many related to head and neck injuries. "Since e-scooters became a popular form of transportation in [major cities](#), the number of injuries jumped significantly because they've become more available to more people," said Dr. Yaremchuk.

Henry Ford researchers looked at available data from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and found that between January 2009 and December 2019 there were more than 100,000 e-scooter related injuries reported. The study found that head and neck injuries made up nearly 28% of the total e-scooter related injuries reported.

Dr. Yaremchuk hopes that local and national regulations can be developed to increase ride [safety](#).

Researchers found that since the introduction of rideshare e-scooters, motorized vehicles that can reach speeds of up to 35 miles per hour, injuries have increased as more people gravitate to the inexpensive and convenient form of transportation used mostly in crowded urban centers and on college campuses.

"We hope our findings will help educate users of rideshare e-scooters about the potential for serious head and neck injuries and the [safety precautions](#) they should take," said Dr. Yaremchuk.

E-scooters are part of the Micromobility revolution that has been called the future of urban transportation. Serious injuries, though, are mounting among riders who find themselves unguarded against cars and bicycles and fixed street ornaments like light poles and signs.

The study found common types of e-scooter related head and neck injuries included:

- Internal organs, including brain injuries, 32.5%
- Lacerations, 24.9%
- Contusions and abrasions, 15.6%
- Concussions, 11.1%
- Fractures, 7.8%

"As a physician, I would recommend that people who use this mode of transportation wear a helmet and apply the same approach as when driving a car," said Samantha Tam, M.D., a Henry Ford otolaryngologist and study co-author.

If you plan to ride an electric scooter, here are a few safety tips to reduce your risk for [injury](#):

- Wear a helmet, knee and elbow pads
- Wear appropriate clothing that won't constrict your body while riding
- Understand the specifications, features and capabilities of the specific e-scooter you are riding
- Observe traffic laws, focus on the path ahead and watch for pedestrians, cars and other obstacles

Safety research has shown that e-scooter accidents involved cars and ground obstacles such as curbs, poles and even manhole covers. Other factors that led to accidents include mechanical problems such as failing

brakes and wheels, and distracted riders.

More information: Aditi Kappagantu et al, Head and Neck Injuries and Electronic Scooter Use in the United States, *The Laryngoscope* (2021). [DOI: 10.1002/lary.29620](https://doi.org/10.1002/lary.29620)

Provided by Henry Ford Health System

Citation: If you ride an e-scooter, take safety precautions (2021, June 17) retrieved 4 February 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-06-e-scooter-safety-precautions.html>

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