

LAWN MOWING AND FOOT INJURIES

Lawn mowing season has started and those out and about cutting their grass need to be extremely careful when operating rotary-blade lawn mowers.

Each year, some 25,000 Americans sustain injuries from power mowers, according to the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission. Although the number of accidents has steadily declined since the 1982 adoption of federal safety standards, too many foot injuries from power lawnmowers still occur. Lawn mower blades whirl at 3000 revolutions per minute and produce three times the kinetic energy of a .357 handgun. Foot injuries range from dirty, infection-prone lacerations to severed tendons to amputated toes.

If a mower accident occurs – even with just a minor injury – Immediate treatment is necessary to flush the wound thoroughly and apply antibiotics to prevent infection. Superficial wounds can be treated on an outpatient basis, but more serious injuries usually require surgical intervention to repair tendon damage, deep clean the wound and suture it. Tendons severed in lawnmower accidents generally can be re-attached surgically unless toes have been amputated.

Children under the age of 14 and adults over age 44 are more likely to be injured from mowers than others. He advises anyone who operates a power mower to take a few simple precautions:

Don't mow a wet lawn. Losing control from slipping on rain-soaked grass is the leading cause of foot injuries caused by power mowers.

Wear heavy shoes or work boots when mowing – no sneakers or sandals.

Mow slowly across slopes, never go up and down.

Never pull a running mower backward.

Keep the clip bag attached when operating a power mower to prevent projectile injuries.

Use a mower with a release mechanism on the handle that automatically shuts it off when the hands let go.

Always keep children away from the lawn when mowing it.

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