

# Following safety rules keeps kids safe when riding ATVs

All Terrain Vehicles, or ATVs, have become popular with families across the country-and riders have helped the sport remain a safe one by taking a safety course and by following the "golden safety rules." They include always wearing a helmet, and other protective gear, never carrying passengers, riding an ATV right for your age, always supervising youngsters, never riding while intoxicated and not riding on public roads.

However, there are other safety precautions parents should take into account when deciding if their child is ready to ride. Not all youngsters have the strength, judgment or skills to operate an ATV. Here are some points to consider:

## Visual Perception And Motor Development

Children should be able to:

- Perceive depth or distance.
- Rely on peripheral or side vision.
- Judge speed and follow the movement of objects.

- Follow a moving object while using their hands.

- Maintain their attention while taking in a lot of sights, sounds and instructions.

## Physical Development

Children should be able to sit comfortably on the ATV and reach the controls safely. They should also have enough strength and familiarity to operate the controls with ease. In addition, children need to be coordinated (at least enough to ride a bicycle, skateboard or roller-skate) and have sufficient endurance to maintain strength over time.

## Emotional Development

Parents should ask themselves if their child can:

- Understand and follow rules and obey parents and supervisors.

- Control behavior according to expectations.

- Understand that other youngsters may be permitted to do what he or she may not be allowed to do.

- Give reasons and solutions to problems they encounter.

- Make decisions based on reality, not fantasy.

## Decision Making

Child riders need to know that bad decisions they make can result in injury. They also need a basic understanding of what being careful means, as well as an understanding that rules are made to increase safety and lead to long-term enjoyment of ATVs.

Children should not be allowed to ride if:

- They do not have a basic understanding of the physical limitations of stopping and turning.

- They cannot describe cause-and-effect experiences.

- They cannot concentrate on more than one element at a time in solving a puzzle or problem.

"Parents, Youngsters and All-Terrain Vehicles" was developed especially for parents to help determine whether their youngsters are ready to ride an ATV. This booklet provides important safety information and tips on learning to ride an ATV. To obtain a copy of the booklet or for information on training, please visit [www.atvsafety.org](http://www.atvsafety.org) or call 1-800-887-2887.



Mike Mebruer of Syracuse used nightcrawlers to bring in his 30 3/4 inch, 12 pound, 2 ounce fish.

# Do's, don'ts help keep food-borne illness away

Cookouts are a time of family and food and fun...but you certainly don't want food-borne illness spoiling your good time. So it's important to keep some food safety DON'TS and DO'S in mind.

Now one of the big DON'TS is you don't want to take all your food and cut it on a single cutting board. People will take meat, cut it on the cutting board and then cut fruits and vegetables just a few minutes later and you run the risk of cross-contamination. So the DO here is you always want to keep two nonporous plastic cutting boards on hand-one just for raw meats and one for things like fruits and vegetables. That's a great way to help keep your family healthy and safe.

Something else you don't want to do: You don't want to take your beverages and your

food and stuff them into one cooler. And that's because at summer cookouts, you're opening and closing the cooler all day to get your beverages out and when you do that your food might get too warm. Bacteria can grow. So the DO here is to keep two separate nice big plastic coolers on hand, one for beverages and one just for your food. Another great tip to help you have a healthy and safe cookout.

Another DON'T that my husband used to do until we got married: He would only use one set of utensils. You want two sets of plastic utensils, and the reason for that is you want one set for the raw food and one set for the cooked food to prevent cross-contamination. To be on the safe side with things such as hamburgers (which must be cooked to an internal

temperature of 160 degrees, according to the USDA), you'll want to keep some plastic meat thermometers on hand.

Another really fun food safety DO is to take big, plastic bowls and fill them with ice and put your salads and dips right in there to stay nice and cold. These are great ways to help keep everybody healthy and safe at summer cookouts.

And for even more tips on food safety and some great healthy recipes, you can check out my new Web site, which is [Meal Makeovers.com](http://MealMakeovers.com).

Liz Weiss, MS, RD, is co-author of "The Moms' Guide To Meal Makeovers" (Broadway Books, 2004) and founder of [www.Meal Makeovers.com](http://www.MealMakeovers.com).

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