

Script – Broadcast – Shooting straight when it comes to hunting safety

INTRO

Dr. John Bednar has seen it all when it comes to hunting accidents.

Broken bones, injured backs, heart attacks, you name it. According to Dr. Bednar, an emergency room physician with OSF HealthCare, many of the injuries, such as tripping or falling from a tree stand, are the result of alcohol and drug use.

(((SOT)))

John Bednar, MD, emergency room physician, OSF HealthCare

"Common hunting injuries include falls, whether that's a fall while you're hiking, carrying, hauling or whether it's a fall out of the tree stand. Other injuries that we see in the emergency department are accidental shootings, whether it's self-inflicted or somebody else in your party." (:17)

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Fortunately, those visits to the ER are not common because many hunters are well educated when it comes to their safety, Dr. Bednar says. Still, accidents happen, especially during the fall hunting season.

It's essential to be in good health if you're planning on hunting. Dr. Bednar has treated several hunters who have suffered a heart attack due to excess exertion. That's because of the hiking, walking and climbing you do – all while carrying gear or dragging an animal carcass. Dr. Bednar says it's an especially important reminder for people in their 60s who don't have the stamina they used to. In fact, he recommends older hunters let the younger people in the group do the heavy lifting. And take several rest breaks if you're not used to strenuous hikes.

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John Bednar, MD, emergency room physician, OSF HealthCare

"They need to know what their fitness level is when they are out hunting. Whether you're hauling gear or hauling deer, you have to know what your limits are." (:08)

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Other helpful tips include being familiar with the area where you're hunting. Let others know exactly where you're going to be and when you plan on calling it a day, especially if you have weak cell service. Consider using a two-way radio or loud whistle in case you need help.

It's never a bad idea to pack a first aid kit, including tourniquets – learn CPR and be prepared for any injuries. And now that cooler weather is here, make sure to dress appropriately. Hunters are more likely to suffer frostbite and hypothermia if they've been drinking. Cover your ears, nose, fingers and toes.

And wear blaze orange instead of camouflage so that you're visible to other hunters. Wear safety glasses and ear protection. And if you're bringing your hunting dog, keep him safe by tying a brightly colored bandana around his neck or buy a brightly colored vest for your four-legged friend.

If you or another member of your party suffers a serious or life-threatening injury, call 9-1-1 immediately.