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Snowboarder Injury Prompts Helmet Awareness

Officials Urge Use Of Helmets

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WARREN, Vt. -- For longtime snowboarder Mary Simmons, wearing a helmet at the Sugarbush Ski Resort has become second nature.

"Now after so many years, I feel kinda naked without my helmet," said Simmons. The hardware is something Simmons has in common with countless other snowboarders, including professional rider [Kevin Pearce](#) .

The Vermont native fell hard during a training run last week in Salt Lake City and [severely injured his brain](#), despite the fact that he was wearing a helmet.

[WPTZ.com Olympic Zone](#)

Pearce's injury hasn't made some snowboarders, who don't protect their heads, think twice. They argue injuries while snowboarding come with the territory.

"Going that big, as big as they do at the Olympic level, if they knock their head, they're going to knock themselves out. It's just the sport, it's what happens," said snowboarder Sky Gale, 22.

But Dr. Rob Williams, of Fletcher Allen Hospital, who's become an advocate for helmet use, doesn't agree.

"There's no downside whatsoever to wearing a ski helmet. If you have a helmet on the odds are much better that you're going to survive an accident than if not," said Williams.

According to Williams, head injuries on the mountain could be cut in half if more people wore helmets. But until ski resorts start mandating helmets, wearing one will remain a personal choice.