

Summer Safety Tips

With summer in full swing, most of us are spending more time outdoors. Keeping your family safe can prove to be a bigger challenge this time of year. Read on for some tips to help you and your family have a safe, enjoyable summer.



Sunscreen

Summer often means fun in the sun. The first step in preparing for a day outside starts with sun protection. The best line of defense against those harmful rays is covering up. Shade is a good choice, when possible, along with limiting sun exposure during peak intensity hours – between 10 AM and 4 PM. Liberally apply sunscreen (SPF # 15 or above) to your children 6 months and older, remembering to reapply at least every 2 hours, and after swimming or sweating. Don't forget their eyes! When choosing those cute little sunglasses, make sure they provide 97 to 100% protection against UVA and UVB rays.



Fluids

Your day of fun in the sun should also include plenty of fluids. Children (and adults) should be well hydrated and not feel thirsty. Water is always a good choice, but it's ok to add a sports drink when there is excessive heat and humidity and prolonged exercise.



Helmets

Remember those summers spent out riding your bike all day? Encourage your children to do the same, with a properly fitted bike. Getting a bike that your child can “grow into” is not a good idea. EVERY bike ride should start with a helmet! Children learn best by observing you, so set the example by wearing your helmet. Most serious bicycle injuries occur as a result of being hit by a motor vehicle. Make sure your child understands the rules of the road: Ride with traffic; Stop and look both ways before entering the street; Stop at all intersections before turning; Use hand signals and look all ways.



Safe places/safe people/safe word

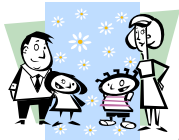
Once you have determined that your child is mature and responsible enough to play outside alone, you need to have a discussion about safety. Not only should you discuss “safe places”, but also “safe people”. Many parents establish a “safe word” with their children to be used if another adult approaches your child. It's also a good idea to practice what they should do if that person does not know the safe word. Whenever you choose to have this conversation with your child, approach it in a calm and reassuring manner. This will help your child feel some independence rather than instilling fear.



Picnics

What would summer be without picnics? Most every outdoor picnic has food.....and insects! Avoid dressing in bright or flowery printed clothing. Don't use scented soaps, perfumes or hair sprays. 10% -30% DEET is approved for children over 2 months of age. 10% DEET will provide protection for about 2 hours, while 30% protects for about 5 hours. Choose the lowest concentration that will provide protection for the length of time you will need. Make sure children wash their hands before eating and are bathed with soap and water when returning indoors. Don't use combination sunscreen/repellent products because the sunscreen needs to be reapplied regularly but the insect repellent should not be. DEET does not prevent bites from stinging insects. If your child does get stung you may remove a visible stinger from the skin by using a credit card to gently scrape it off horizontally. Avoid pinching the stinger as this can actually release more venom into the skin.

Remember to keep your picnic food well chilled. Only leave foods out of the cooler long enough to eat. Discard any foods that were not kept properly chilled. It's not worth ending a day of fun with food poisoning!



Memories

Summer is a wonderful time for families to reconnect and form lasting memories. Take some time this season to plan your summer fun and play with your kids!