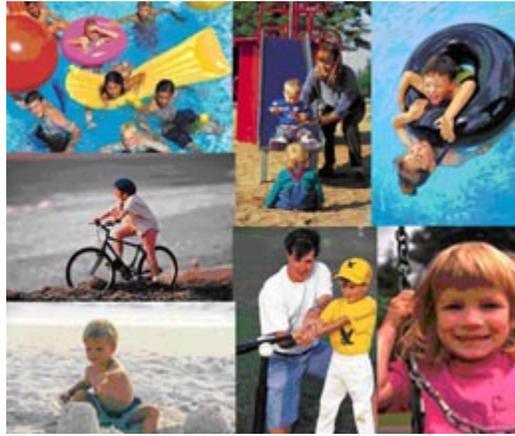


Summer Safety For Children



Summer is a time for school classrooms and hallways to empty and the awaited anticipation of our children's' fun and play time.

Yet, emergency rooms across the country call summertime 'the trauma season for kids.' From the heat to pools to bike riding, parents need to be on alert.

Childhood memories are filled with summertime fun which means trips to the beach, ice cream, and rides at the amusement park. While your family enjoys the summer, emergency room doctors don't enjoy what they refer to as the *trauma season*.

This summer children ages 14 and under will be rushed to emergency rooms nearly 3 million times for serious injuries resulting from motor vehicle crashes, drowning, bike crashes, pedestrian incidents, falls and other hazards. More than 2,500 children will die.

Tragedies rise and nearly half (40 percent) of all unintentional injury-related deaths occur during the summer months (May to August) because children are supervised less, have more free time and are involved in more outdoor activities. While you relax this summer, summer is not the time to relax about safety. Close supervision, proper protective gear, and other simple prevention steps will help keep your child safe.

Trauma is preventable. Keeping your children out of the emergency room takes thought and preparation.

First and foremost ... please remember to drive safely and use proper child seating and safety belts. It could save your child's life, yours and protect your family. **Please read more about car safety below.**

Heat can kill. Children are smaller than adults and they dehydrate quicker. When kids play, they sweat. They should not be out in the heat for more than 30 minutes. Bring them inside for at least 15 minutes for water and snacks.

Insect Bites can be dangerous. Bugs also enjoy the outdoors. These creepy crawly, biting, stinging pests don't have to be such a pain if parents discourage children from getting excited and moving rapidly when they see insects - movement encourages insects to bite. Keep sugary foods and trash cans away from outside play and eating areas and avoid sweets during picnics - unless water is accessible to rinse off sticky areas after eating.

Sun Tips to Prevent Skin Cancer in Later Life. There are many steps you can take to reduce your child's exposure to the sun's rays. Sunscreens, wide brimmed hats, protective clothing and sun avoidance (between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.) are important for maximum sun protection. Sunscreens should be viewed as a back-up to primary means of

sun protection such as shirts, hats and sun avoidance. Always reapply sunscreen - even if it's waterproof - immediately after coming out of the water.

Bike Riding without helmets is an accident waiting to happen. Wearing a cast on an arm or leg can be uncomfortable in the summer, but you cannot put a cast on a child's brain. Brain injury is the most serious of injuries. Children must wear helmets every time they're on their bikes- no matter what.

Water Safety is critical. According to the US Consumer Product Safety Commission, an estimated 260 children under five years of age drown each year in residential swimming pools and spas. It is estimated that another 3,000 children under age five are treated in hospital emergency rooms following submersion accidents each year. Some of these submersion accidents result in permanent brain damage. Nationally, drowning is the fourth leading cause of death to children under five.

To ensure that your children are safe, never leave them unsupervised around water. Teach your child to swim, but remember that younger children shouldn't be left unsupervised around water even if they know how to swim. It is recommended that children under age four not be given formal swimming lessons, especially as a primary means to prevent the risk of drowning.

- Always wear a safety approved life jacket when on a lake, river or ocean while boating, water skiing, jet skiing or tubing.
- Warn your children about playing in canals or other fast moving water.
- Do not let your child play around any water (lake, pool, ocean, etc.) without adult supervision (even if he is a good swimmer).
- Don't allow running or rough play around the water.
- Childproof your swimming pool with a fence around your backyard and a fence (at least 4 feet high) around the pool, with a self-closing, self-latching gate. Also consider having a phone poolside and learning CPR in case of emergencies.

Water Park Safety is another place where children should never go unsupervised at all times. Older kids can use the buddy system. If your child is a weak swimmer use a floatation device. Be sure to read and follow ALL park rules. Your child should always wear sunscreen. Do not be fooled by waterproof sunscreen. Reapply it after swimming. Give them plenty of water to drink to avoid heat related illnesses and know their physical limits. Observe rides before you let them ride them. Do not allow children to dive. Always make sure you know the depth of the water they wade in. If you have a toddler touching them at all times to check body temperatures. Most minor injuries at water parks are caused by slips and falls - don't run. It's a good idea for parents to know CPR, First Aid and where telephones are located.

Grilling Outdoors – take caution. Never bring charcoal grills indoors. Burning charcoal produces deadly carbon monoxide. When cooking outdoors with a gas grill, check the air tubes that lead into the burner for any blockage from insects, spiders, or food grease. Check grill hoses for cracking, brittleness, holes, and leaks. Make sure there are no sharp bends in the hose or tubing. If you ever detect a leak, immediately turn off the gas at the tank and don't attempt to light the grill until the leak is fixed. Newer grills and propane tanks have improved safety devices to prevent gas leaks.

Home Playgrounds – make sure your home playground is safe. Falls causes 60 percent of playground injuries, so having a safe surface is critical. Concrete, asphalt or packed dirt surfaces are too hard. Use at least 9 inches of wood chips or mulch.

Sports - use softer-than standard baseballs, safety-release bases and batting helmets with face guards to reduce baseball-related injuries to children.

If you are a **soccer** parent, beware that movable soccer goals can fall over and kill children. Make sure the goal is anchored securely at all times and never allow anyone to climb on the net or goal framework or hang from the cross bar. Remove nets when the goals are not in use.

To prevent serious injuries while using a **trampoline**, allow only one person on at a time, and do not allow somersaults. Use a shock-absorbing pad that completely covers the springs and place the trampoline away from structures and other play areas. Kids under 6-years-old should not use full-size trampolines.

Don't allow a game of **hide-n-seek** to become deadly. There have been nationwide reports of numerous suffocation deaths involving children who crawled inside old cedar chests, latch-type freezers and refrigerators, iceboxes in campers, clothes dryers and picnic coolers. Childproof old appliances, warn children not to play inside them.

If summer plans include **camping** and you want heat inside your tent or camper, use one of the new portable heaters that are equipped with an oxygen depletion sensor (ODS). If oxygen levels start to fall inside your tent or camper, the ODS automatically shuts down the heater before it can produce deadly levels of carbon monoxide (CO). Do not attempt to use alternative sources of heat or power to warm a tent or camper. Traditional camping heaters, charcoal grills, camping lanterns, and gas generators also can cause CO poisoning.

Home - Install **window guards** to prevent children from falling out of open windows. Guards should be installed in children's bedrooms, parents' bedrooms, and other rooms where young children spend time. Or, install window stops that permit windows to open no more than 4 inches. Whenever possible, open windows from the top - not the bottom. Also, keep furniture away from windows to discourage children from climbing near windows.

Summer also means **yard work**. When mowing, keep small children out of the yard, and turn the mower off if children enter the area. If the lawn slopes, mow across the slope with the walk-behind rotary mower, never up and down. With a riding mower, drive up and down the slope, not across it. Never carry children on a riding mower.

Your Car - We all know the sadness and disbelief we feel when we read local headlines about a child dying after being left **unattended in a hot car**.

Since 1998, over 230 children have died after being left in a hot car (sometimes on relatively mild days with only 70 degree temperatures) most of them ages 3 and younger. They died from heat stroke after being trapped in the car. In the summer of 1999, an average of one child every four days died after being trapped in a car parked in the searing heat.

Many parents mistakenly think they can leave a child in a vehicle while running a "quick" errand. Yet, a delay of just a few minutes can lead to tragedy. Heat is much more dangerous to children than it is to adults. When left in a hot vehicle, a young child's core body temperature can increase three to five times faster than that of an adult causing permanent injury or death. Children should never be left alone inside of your car, even for a few minutes.

As school's out for summer, kids are everywhere and parents should be too. Even though your children may be older, make sure you're on watch, so that you won't have to take a trip to the emergency room. Enjoy the summer with your children - **SAFELY!**