

May Newsletter



Top 7 summer safety hazards:

As reported by the American Academy of Pediatrics

Playgrounds: Injury facts – children who fall off climbing equipment, slides, and swings usually injure their face, head, or arms. Safety check - preschool-age children shouldn't be more than four feet off the ground. Make sure surfaces are cushioned, equipment maintained, and no exposed bolts or open "s" hooks.

Heat exposure: Illness facts - Children can develop heat exhaustion and become seriously dehydrated when in the hot sun for too long. Symptoms include pale skin, dizziness, headache, fatigue, nausea, and vomiting. Kids under four years old are especially at risk in high temperatures. Safety check – Keep children indoors during heat waves. Make sure they have plenty of fluids even if kids say they are not thirsty. NEVER leave a child in a car, which can heat up quickly.

Fireworks: Injury facts – fireworks can cause serious eye injuries that lead to partial or complete blindness. Sparklers can burn the skin and ignite clothing. Safety check – Don't use or let your children use or be around any fireworks, including sparklers. Instead, visit a public display run by professionals.

Bicycles: Injury facts: Kids often crash into obstacles or lose control of their bikes, but the most serious injuries occur when children are struck by cars.

Safety check – Make sure your child wears a helmet every time they ride a bike. It should be snug and level with the forehead. Do not let children ride in the street before the age of 10, and teach riders to look both ways before crossing the driveway or streets.

Skateboards and Scooters: Injury facts – head injuries and wrist fractures are a common occurrence. Kids are most likely to get hurt when they are first learning to ride, ride too fast, or attempt tricks. Safety check – Safety gear is a must! Helmets, wrist guards, non-slip shoes, elbow pads, and knee pads should be worn, and no child under 5 years should use skateboards or scooters.

Lawn Mowers: Too many tragic accidents happen when a child falls off a riding lawn mower or is accidentally run over. Safety check – Keep all children far away from the mowing area. Always look around the mower before putting into motion, especially when backing up.

Food Poisoning: Illness facts – Bacteria grow quickly in perishable food that is left out too long. Symptoms resemble stomach flu: nausea, cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, and in severe cases, fever and bloody stool. Safety check – Make sure food is cooked thoroughly. Wash your hands often, and never leave food out for more than an hour when it's hot outside. Store food in a well insulated cooler with plenty of ice when outside at picnics and barbecues.

Always seek the advice from your own doctor regarding questions or issues you have regarding your own health or the health of others

Sun Protection

When kids are outdoors, it's important to protect their skin to prevent melanoma and skin damage from too much sun exposure.

Here's how to help kids enjoy fun in the sun safely.

Why Is Sun Protection Important?

Too much unprotected exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can cause skin damage, eye damage, immune system suppression, and skin cancer. Even people in their twenties can develop skin cancer.

Who Needs Sun Protection?

Every child needs sun protection. The lighter someone's natural skin color, the less melanin it has to absorb UV rays and protect itself. The darker a person's natural skin color, the more melanin it has. But both dark- and light-skinned kids need protection from UV rays because any tanning or burning causes skin damage.

Here are the key ways to protect kids' skin:

Use Sunscreen

The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) recommends that all kids — regardless of their skin tone — wear sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. Whatever sunscreen you choose, make sure it's broad-spectrum (protects against both UVA and UVB rays) and, if kids are in or near water, is labeled water-resistant. Apply a generous amount and re-apply often.

Avoid the Strongest Rays of the Day

Try to stay in the shade when the sun is at its strongest (usually from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the northern hemisphere). If kids are in the sun during this time, apply and reapply sunscreen — even if they're just playing in the backyard. Most sun damage happens from exposure during day-to-day activities, not from being at the beach. Remember that even on cloudy, cool, or overcast days, UV rays reach the earth. This "invisible sun" can cause unexpected sunburn and skin damage.

Cover Up

One of the best ways to protect skin is to cover up. To make sure clothes offer enough protection, put your hand inside garments to make sure you can't see it through them.

Babies have thinner skin and underdeveloped melanin, so their skin burns easily. The best protection for babies under 6 months of age is shade, so they should be kept out of the sun whenever possible. If your baby must be in the sun, dress him or her in clothing that covers the body, including hats with wide brims to shadow the face. If your baby is younger than 6 months old and still has small areas of skin (like the face) exposed, you can use a tiny amount of SPF 15 sunscreen on those areas.

Even older kids need to escape the sun. For outdoor events, bring along a wide umbrella or a pop-up tent to play in. If it's not too hot outside and won't make kids even more uncomfortable, have them wear light long-sleeved shirts and/or long pants.

Wear Sunglasses

Sun exposure damages the eyes as well as the skin. Even 1 day in the sun can lead to a burned cornea (the outer clear membrane layer of the eye). Sun exposure over time can cause cataracts (clouding of the eye lens, which leads to blurred vision) later in life. The best way to protect eyes is to wear sunglasses that provide 100% UV protection.

Let kids pick their own pair — many options are fun, with multicolored frames or cartoon characters.

Double-Check Medicines

Some medicines make skin more sensitive to UV rays. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if any prescription (especially antibiotics and acne medicines) and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines your kids take can increase sun sensitivity. If so, take extra sun precautions. The best protection is simply covering up or staying indoors; even sunscreen can't always protect skin from sun sensitivity.