

Keeping Children Safe This Summer

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With summer here, there are ways your children can have fun while keeping healthy and safe. There are many things to keep in mind, and one key is to have children close by so you can do your best to prevent accidents.

Ask your doctor questions about car seats, immunizations, sunscreen, and other things that will help you keep your child healthy and safe.

Here are some summer tips:

1. Never leave children alone in or near a pool, in the bathtub, or even playing with a bucket of water. You may be tempted to run into the house for something, but don't take the chance. In the ocean, even teenagers and good swimmers should always have a buddy to swim with. Never swim alone.
2. Use sunscreen when you go outdoors. Check with your doctor or pharmacist for the best kind. The sun protection factor (SPF) should be at least 15, but you generally don't need to go above 30. When putting sunscreen on, put it on thick, making sure every part of your child's body gets covered. Don't forget the ears, nose, back of the neck, shoulders, and behind the legs. It's suggested that you apply more sunscreen every two hours or every time your child gets wet or dried off with a towel. A recommendation for children is to use sunscreen labeled "PABA-free." PABA has been linked with skin irritation.

It's also suggested that you keep babies under six months of age out of the sun, and covered with clothes and a hat, and if you need to use sunscreen, use only a small amount.

(Source: <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/archives/tanning.htm>)

3. When the temperature is hot make sure children drink lots of water to prevent dehydration. Offer water even if they aren't thirsty.
4. Bike riding is great fun for children of all ages. Make sure children always wear a bike helmet. Even when they complain they don't want to wear one, tell them it's the rule because it can prevent serious injury. When you buy a helmet, look for a label that says the helmet meets the CPSC safety standard. Wear the helmet so that it is level on the head, not tipped forwards or backwards. Securely fasten the strap. Check with your Pediatrician to see if there are programs that can help you get good helmets at a reasonable price.

(Source: <http://www.aap.org/family/bicycle.htm>)

Have fun with your children this summer. Make sure they're not watching too much TV, but are getting outside to play. When you give children the opportunity to have fun, eat well, and play hard, you are setting a foundation for a healthy life.

Many of these recommendations can be found at:

American Academy of Pediatrics: (In Spanish and English)
<http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/summertips.htm>