

## April 2018-Summer Safety

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) estimates that every year, one in four kids ages 14 and younger will sustain an injury that requires medical attention. Forty percent of all injury-related emergency room visits and 42 percent of all injury deaths happen between May and August, they report but it is not all bad news. We can keep kids free from about 90 percent of these accidents by educating ourselves and our kids on how to stay safe while still enjoying summer vacation. I consulted the CDC and the AAP websites and came up with a few summer safety tips for our kids.

- 1) Bites and Stings: Insect repellents are used to reduce bites from mosquitoes, ticks, fleas and other bothersome bugs. The repellents that contain 10-30 percent DEET can be toxic so they should only be used on exposed skin and clothing and should not be applied to the face or hands. The higher concentrations will last longer but it is less toxic to reapply a lower concentration more frequently. The CDC recommends repellents that contain picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus; both are non-toxic and work just as well as the DEET formulas. The higher concentrations will last longer but it is less toxic to reapply a lower concentration more frequently.
- 2) Food poisoning: Food-borne illness looks a lot like the flu, and typically includes nausea, stomach cramps, vomiting and diarrhea. One of the best ways to avoid food poisoning during the summertime is to be sure food items that contain mayonnaise, milk, eggs, meat, poultry and seafood are not kept at room temperature for more than an hour. If you are traveling with food, pack any raw meat separately from ready-to-eat foods to avoid contamination.
- 3) Sunburn: The Skin Cancer Foundation, reports that if you have even one, blistering sunburn when you are a kid, you are doubling your chances of developing melanoma. Sunscreen should be water resistant, have a SPF of at least 30 and should be applied 15-30 minutes before going outside and should be reapplied every two hours or after swimming or vigorous activity.
- 4) Hydration: Kids are already mildly dehydrated by the time they recognize that they are thirsty. The AAP recommends that kids that are active in sports should be drinking four ounces every 20-30 minutes to avoid dehydration. Sport drinks are also an option if they follow the guidelines and contain at least 100mg of sodium and 28mg of potassium in eight ounces.
- 5) Heat-related Illness: Heat exhaustion may include thirst, fatigue and muscle cramps. If left untreated, it can progress to heatstroke which is a serious condition. Heatstroke symptoms may include: dizziness, trouble breathing, headaches, rapid heartbeat, nausea, vomiting, confusion and changes in blood pressure. Skin may be flushed and feel hot and dry (not sweaty). Body temperature may rise to 104 degrees or higher and as it becomes more severe there is a risk of organ damage. Kids are more susceptible to heat illnesses because of their partially developed central nervous system. Strenuous activity and dehydration make it difficult for young bodies to regulate changes in body temperature.

There is an extended version of this article on my school web page with more safety tips. You can also go to either one of these websites for more information.

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)