

PE D I A T R I C S

of
Northeastern Pennsylvania

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SUMMER SAFETY

Summer is here and it's time to head outdoors. Here are some safety reminders to keep your child healthy and safe as they enjoy a summer full of fun.

SUNSCREEN

Routine use of sunscreen is recommended due to increasing evidence that exposure to even small amounts of ultraviolet radiation is harmful. Besides the immediate discomfort of a sunburn or sun poisoning, unprotected exposure to ultraviolet light (natural sunlight) in children can lead to highly increased rates of skin cancer in adults. Sunscreen is important even in persons of dark complexion, and even on cloudy or overcast days.

Here are some tips to keep your child safe in the sun:

- Try to keep your child out of the sun when the peak ultraviolet rays occur between 10A.M. and 4P.M..
- If the above is not possible always use a sunscreen SPF (Sun Protection Factor) of AT LEAST 30, and one that protects against both UVA and UVB rays. Don't forget often overlooked places such as the ears, the scalp, and the tops of the feet.
- Apply the sunscreen half an hour before going out. Use a generous amount (don't be shy), and reapply often, even if the sunscreen claims to be waterproof.
- Sunscreen is safe even in small infants, however, in children less than 2, long sleeve lightweight clothing and a hat are preferred. A hypoallergenic sunscreen such as Coppertone Water Babies or Aveeno Baby is recommended for small infants. It is also recommended to test sunscreen on a small area before applying all over, as allergic reactions to some ingredients in sunscreen can occur.

BUG SAFETY

- Don't use scented soaps, perfumes or hair sprays on your child.
- Avoid areas where insects nest or congregate, such as stagnant pools of water, uncovered foods and gardens where flowers are in bloom.
- Avoid dressing your child in clothing with bright colors or flowery prints.
- To remove a stinger from skin, gently scrape it off horizontally with a credit card or your fingernail. Do not use tweezers.
- Insect repellants are available in several different formulations including those with DEET and those containing essential oils such as eucalyptus or citronella. Remember that repellants protect only against biting insects, not stinging ones.
- Always check the DEET concentration of the repellant you are using. DEET concentration should be kept at less than 30% for children.
- As an alternative to DEET, Picaridin has become available in the US in concentrations of 5%-10%
- Insect repellant is not recommended for babies less than 2 months old.

- Apply repellent to clothing and exposed skin. Avoid spraying directly onto face, and do not apply to open cuts and wounds.
- Do not use products that combine sunscreen and insect repellents.
- Please note that wristbands soaked in repellent, bug zappers, and ultrasonic devices have been found to be ineffective.**

LYME DISEASE

Lyme disease in children has been increasing in Pennsylvania for the last few years. Symptoms of Lyme disease usually include a red rash (which may or may not resemble a “bull’s eye”) at the site of a tick bite (typically presenting 7-14 days after the initial tick bite), spreading rash anywhere on the body, fever and sometimes a red swollen tender joint (typically the knee). Non-specific symptoms such as headache, fatigue, poor appetite etc, in the absence of classic symptoms, are very unlikely to be due to Lyme disease in children. If you find a tick on your child, grasp it firmly with tweezers where tick has attached to skin (do not squeeze body of tick) and remove it as best you can-- small mouth parts of the tick may be left behind in your child's skin but are generally harmless and will fall out naturally. There may be a small area of redness or irritation after the tick is removed. Please monitor this site for a spreading rash.

If your child has an engorged tick (usually one that has been attached for at least 36hrs) on their skin, they may be a candidate for antibiotic prophylaxis (a preventive dose of an antibiotic to try to prevent Lyme disease). If your child shows symptoms of Lyme disease or may be a candidate for Lyme prophylaxis, please call our office for an appointment.

WATER SAFETY

Water is one of the most ominous hazards your child will encounter. Young children can drown in only a few inches of water, even if they've had swimming instruction.

Here are some water safety tips to keep in mind this summer:

- Be aware of small bodies of water such as drainage ditches, fish ponds, water fountains and even the bucket of water you use to wash your car. Children are drawn to places and things like these and need constant supervision so that they don't fall in.
- Children who are swimming in any body of water even a toddler's pool should be supervised by an adult trained in CPR. Inflatable pools should be emptied and put away after each use.
- Enforce safety rules at the pool. There should be no running near the pool and no pushing and holding people underwater. Children also need to understand that they are only allowed to enter the pool when an adult is present.
- Above ground pools should be equipped with ladders that can be removed when not in use. In ground pools should be completely surrounded by a 5-foot fence with a gate that locks. Keep the gate closed and locked at-all-times. You may also want to consider door alarms or water entry alarms if your house opens directly to the pool.
- If your pool has a cover, remove it completely before swimming.
- Keep a safety ring with a rope at the pool at all times. Also, it is helpful to have a phone with pre programmed emergency numbers near the pool at all times.
- Spas and hot tubs are dangerous for young children who can easily drown or become overheated in them. Don't allow young children to use these facilities
- Your child should always wear a life preserver when riding in a boat.
- Adults should not drink alcohol while swimming. It presents a danger to them as well as the young children they might be supervising

The above sun, water, and insect safety guides will help ensure a safe and healthy summer. We hope this summer brings you many opportunities to spend a large amount of quality family

time with your children enjoying the great outdoors. We hope you found these tips helpful.
HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!!