

Ask an Expert: Four Tips for Summer Safety

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Many families are heading outdoors for recreation and activities. Whether in the pool or park, the ballfield or backyard, take precautionary measures so all family members are safe from sun, insects and injuries. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a portion of their website dedicated to family health. A summary of their tips for family summer safety are included below. For additional information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/p0517-eight-tips-healthy-summer.html>.

Tip 1. Master water safety. Swimming in the pool and playing in the sprinklers are favorite summer activities. However, drowning is the leading cause of death among children ages 1 to 4. Water safety tips from CDC include:

- Carefully watch young children in and around water
- Teach kids to swim. Formal swimming lessons can protect young children from drowning.
- Learn CPR. Knowing this skill can be critical in a time of need.
- Install a four-sided fence around home pools.
- Wear a properly fitted life jacket when boating.

Tip 2. Beat the heat and sun. Overheating and sunstroke can occur in healthy children, youth and adults if they participate in strenuous activities during hot weather. If someone shows signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke, move him or her to a cool location and seek medical help.

To avoid over-heating:

- Never leave infants, children or pets in a parked car, even if the windows are cracked.

- Dress infants and children in loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Schedule outdoor activities in the morning and evening hours.
- Keep cool with cool showers or baths.

A few serious sunburns can lead to skin cancer in the years ahead. Tanning is the skin's way of trying to protect itself from harmful UV rays from the sun. To prevent sunburn:

- Cover up. Clothing that covers the skin helps protect against UV rays.
- Use sunscreen with at least SPF (sun protection factor) 15 and UVA (ultraviolet A) and UVB (ultraviolet B) protection every time you and your child go outside.

Tip 3: Keep ticks and mosquitos from causing harm. Protect yourself and your family from bites and diseases. Zika, West Nile Virus and Lyme disease can all be transmitted by insects. To help with protection:

- Use an effective insect repellent. Products containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535 and some natural oils provide long-lasting protection.
- Some pesticides (acaricides) can reduce the number of ticks, but these should not be relied on for providing full protection.
- Check yourself and your children for ticks after being outdoors, especially if you have been camping or hiking. Instructions for effectively removing ticks are available on the CDC website.

Tip 4: Prevent injuries. Falls at home and on the playground are common causes of visits to the emergency room. To avoid injury:

- Be sure playgrounds are well maintained and have soft landing areas.
 - Wear appropriate protective gear when participating in summer sports.
- Learn to perform basic first aid.

Enjoy fun in the sun, but make safety a priority so that summer is incident and accident free.

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