

For Immediate Release
Contact: Mary Proctor, Safe Kids Coordinator
517-437-7395 ext 137

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

Kicking off Summer Safety Month in May

May, 2007 - With summer right around the corner, many of us are planning outdoor recreational activities like trips to the pool, the lake, bicycle rides, even using fireworks, all of which can present a variety of health and safety hazards. Before heading to the beach or campground, taking a bike ride or lighting firecrackers, Health Department officials are reminding residents to take precautions to make this a safe and enjoyable summer.

Water – Drowning is one of the leading causes of accidental death for children under the age of five in the United States. That's why it's important to never leave children alone near water, not even for a second. The American Red Cross recommends learning how to perform CPR and placing life-saving devices such as a Shepard's hook or swim ring near the pool. "Using common sense and taking appropriate precautions at the lake or at your neighborhood pool will absolutely decrease your chance of injury and allow you to enjoy your summer more," said Mary Proctor of the Community Health Agency.

Bicycles – According to the Department of Transportation the leading factors in bicycle fatalities in 2000 were bicyclists riding or playing in the roadway, failing to yield the right-of-way and crossing roads and intersections improperly. Bicycle deaths and injuries are most likely to occur in the months of July, August and September. Proctor reminds residents that one way to avoid bicycle accidents and injuries is to make sure a child comes to a complete stop at drive-ways and street corners and always wears a helmet and other protective gear.

Fireworks – Summer festivities can come to a quick end if fireworks are used haphazardly. Fireworks, even sparklers, can reach temperature over 1000 degrees. If someone is burned accidentally, he or she could suffer lifelong scars. "Rather than lighting fireworks in their backyard, we encourage people to attend public viewings of fireworks shows," said Proctor. "It's much safer to leave the fireworks to professionals."

More summer safety facts:

- Most personal watercraft injuries result from operators with little experience running into objects like docks, other watercraft or tree stumps.
- Personal watercrafts are much more likely to cause injury or death than boats.
- Wearing a helmet when biking or in-line skating reduces the risk of brain injury by 85 percent.
- Children account for 20 percent of all fire deaths, and over 30 percent of the fires that kill children are set by children playing with fire.
- Each year, approximately 68,000 people are treated in the emergency room for injuries caused by power lawn mowers, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. More than 9,000 of those hurt are under 18 years old.

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is committed to promoting wellness, preventing disease and protecting our environment. To contact one of our 4 offices or to find out more information about Summer Safety and the services we provided to the community please visit us on the web at www.bhsj.org