



"Your Local Health Department"

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Make Summer Safe for Kids!

Learn how your kids can enjoy the summer weather without risking their health or safety.

Summer is around the corner! It is a wonderful time of the year for kids to enjoy an assortment of both indoor and outdoor activities. To make summer both safe and enjoyable for your entire family, especially young children or teens, the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency highlights the importance of learning ways to keep your kids safe and healthy while they enjoy the summer fun.

Water Related Activities

Water related activities are popular for physical activity, staying cool and having fun time with your family and friends. Swimming is the fourth most popular sporting activity in the United States; it is an excellent way to get regular aerobic physical activity. Just two and a half hours per week of aerobic activity (swimming) can decrease the risk of chronic illnesses and lead to improved health for people with diabetes and heart disease. Here are some friendly tips to stay safe while having fun in the water:

- If you enjoy water activities, make sure you know how to swim. Drowning is the leading cause of injury related death for young children ages 1 to 4. If you're not a good swimmer, consider investing in formal swimming lessons. Swimming lessons can protect young children from drowning.
- Make sure there is always an adult present to supervise children when in or around water. A responsible adult should constantly be watching young children.
- Wear protective gear when participating in boating activities such as jet skiing, rafting or fishing.
- Know your limits. If the water is too cold, deep or too far, don't risk your safety.

Protecting Yourself from Ultraviolet Rays

With the weather being so nice outside in the summer time, it's important to make sure you are protecting your body from ultraviolet rays. Serious sun burns can increase you and your child's risk of skin cancer. Here are some tips to protect yourself from ultraviolet rays:

- Cover up. Clothing that covers you and your child's skin helps protect against ultraviolet rays.
- Use sunscreen. For best protection, apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outdoors. Use sunscreen with at least sun protection factor 15, ultraviolet A and ultraviolet B protection every time you and your child go outside.
- Wear a hat and sunglasses. Hats protect and shade your face, scalp, ears and neck. Wearing sunglasses protects your eyes from ultraviolet rays which can lead to cataracts later in life.

Protect and Prevent Bites and Disease Spread by Bugs

Summer allows more time for children to play outdoors. It is also an appropriate time for parents to protect and prevent bites and disease spread by bugs. Here are some safety tips to protect yourself and children from bug bites.

- Use an effective insect repellent. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends using products with 30% or less of these ingredients: DEET, Picaridin; IR 3535; oil of lemon eucalyptus on kids.
- Make sure backyards are a tick safe-zone. Keep patios, play area and playground equipment away from shrubs, bushes and other vegetation.
- Check for ticks after playing outside. Check your kids for ticks around the arms, in and out of ears, behind knees and between legs.

Summertime offers many opportunities for you to be physically active and live a healthier life. Be sure to follow these safety tips while you enjoy all the fun activities with your friends and family. For more information or if you have any questions please visit the Center for Disease and Control and Prevention website at <https://www.cdc.gov/family/kids/summer/index.htm>.