

Keeping your child safe during the long, hot summer

The weather is changing from rainy to sunny...school will soon be out... and summer vacation is just around the corner. Here are a few summer safety tips from Children's Hospital Central California.

Sun is Fun

Try to keep children out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.—that is when the sun's rays are the strongest. Most doctors do not recommend using sunscreen on babies less than six months old. It can cause a skin reaction. For this reason, babies under six months old should be kept out of direct sunlight as much as possible. A baby is more prone to sunburn as the skin is very thin. Move your baby to the shade or under a tree, umbrella, or the stroller canopy. Dress babies in lightweight clothing that covers the arms and legs, using brimmed hats.

If your child is over six months old, sunscreen can be used as long as it does not get in your child's eyes or on the hands. Put on sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going outside. Use sunscreen even on cloudy days. The sun protection factor (SPF) should be at least 15...the higher the SPF number, the more sun blocking protection from the sun. Using waterproof sunscreen when in the water decreases the need to reapply as often.

It is very important for both children and adults to drink plenty of water during those hot summer days. It is especially important for small children as they can become dehydrated much more easily than adults.

Water Safety Tips

Never leave children alone in or near a pool, not even for a moment. Whenever infants or toddlers are in or around water, an adult should be within arm's length, providing "touch supervision". Do not consider children drown proof because they have had swimming lessons. Remember that a child can drown in as little as 1 inch of water. Always drain kiddy pools after children are done playing. Turn them face down to prevent it from being refilled by rainwater and sprinklers.

Enclose your pool on all four sides with a fence or barrier that is at least 5 feet tall. Make sure there are no foot or handholds on the fence that could help a young child climb it. It is best if the house is not one side of the barrier. However if it is, doors leading from the house to the pool should be protected with alarms that make a sound you can hear when a door is unexpectedly opened. All gate entrances to the pool should be self-closing and self-latching, at a height children can't reach.



To learn more about our Water Safety Program visit
[www.childrenscentralcal.org/services/
community/watersafety](http://www.childrenscentralcal.org/services/community/watersafety)

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Toys are toys...they should not be thought of as life preservers to keep the child afloat. Remove toys from in and around the pool when it is not in use. Toys can attract young children to the pool. Be careful with children using floaties or swimmies. These are not life preservers...they can give a false sense of security to you and your child. Life preservers will have "Approved by the Coast Guard as a Personal Flotation Device" (PFD) printed on the vest. If it doesn't say these words, it is not a PFD.

During a social event, appoint a designated adult watcher to protect young children from pool accidents. Adults may take turns being the watcher. When adults become preoccupied, children are at risk. Older siblings should not be asked to watch younger children in the water. They are neither trained nor mature enough to be given such an adult responsibility.

Remember barriers such as fences and floatation devices do not ensure the safety of your child. They provide layers of protection for a child who strays from supervision. Barriers give parents additional time to locate a child before the unexpected becomes a tragedy.

Know what to do in an emergency. Learn CPR. If there is an emergency: **CALL 911.**

If a child is missing, check the pool first. Seconds count in preventing death or disability. Go to the edge of the pool and scan the entire pool, bottom and surface, as well as the pool area.

Playground Safety

Always supervise children using playground equipment. Stay where you can see and hear them. Ensure there is safe surfacing beneath and surrounding all playground equipment in order to minimize the risks of falling. Carefully maintain all equipment. Swings should be made of soft materials like rubber, plastic or canvas. Make sure children cannot reach any moving parts that might pinch or trap any body part. Make sure metal slides are cool to the touch to keep children's legs from getting burned.

Travel Safety

Buckle-up car seats and seat belts. Always use a child passenger safety seat, starting with your baby's first ride home from the hospital. Help your child form a lifelong habit of buckling up. Put your child in the car's backseat. It is the safest place in the car because it is the farthest away from a head-on crash (the most common kind of crash).

Insect Safety

Avoid using scented soaps, perfumes or hair sprays on you or your child; they can attract insects. Wearing shoes and light colored clothing can also minimize the risk of bee and insect stings.

Repellents appropriate for use on children should contain no more than 10 percent DEET because the chemical, which is absorbed through the skin, can cause harm. The concentration of DEET can be very different from product to product, so read the label before you purchase.

Wheeled Sports Helmets

The single most effective safety device available to reduce head injury and death from falls in wheeled sports is a helmet. Make sure children always wear a properly fitting helmet and other appropriate safety gear (wrist, elbow, and kneepads) when riding a bike, scooter, all-terrain vehicle, rollerblading or skateboarding.

