

# Elizabethtown Pediatrics Summer Safety Tips

## SUNBLOCK USAGE

Babies under 6 months:

- The two main recommendations from the AAP to prevent sunburn are to **AVOID sun exposure**, and dress infants in lightweight long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and brimmed hats that shade the neck to prevent sunburn. However when adequate clothing and shade are not available, parents can apply a minimal amount of sunscreen with **at least 15 SPF** (sun protection factor) to small areas, such as the infant's face and the back of the hands. If an infant gets sunburn, apply cold compresses to the affected area.

For Young Children:

- Apply sunscreen at least **30 minutes before going outside**, and **use sunscreen even on cloudy days**. The SPF should be **at least 15** and protect against UVA and UVB rays.

For Older Children:

- The first, and best, line of defense against the sun is covering up. Wear a hat with a three-inch brim or a bill facing forward, sunglasses (look for sunglasses that block 99-100% of ultraviolet rays), and cotton clothing with a tight weave.
- Stay in the shade whenever possible, and limit sun exposure during the peak intensity hours - **between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.** and **ALWAYS** use SPF of 15 or greater.
- **Reapply sunscreen every two hours, or after swimming or sweating.**

## POOL SAFETY

- Install a fence at least four-feet high around all four sides of the pool. The fence should not have openings or protrusions that a young child could use to get over, under, or through.
- Make sure pool **gates open out** from the pool, and self-close and self-latch at a height children can't reach.
- **NEVER** leave children alone in or near the pool, even for a moment.
- Keep rescue equipment (a shepherd's hook - a long pole with a hook on the end - and life preserver) and a portable telephone near the pool. Choose a shepherd's hook and other rescue equipment made of fiberglass or other materials that do not conduct electricity.
- **Avoid inflatable swimming aids such as "floaties."** They are not a substitute for approved life vests and can give children a false sense of security.
- Children may not be developmentally ready for swim lessons until after their **fourth birthday**. Swim programs for children under 4 should not be seen as a way to decrease the risk of drowning.
- Whenever infants or toddlers are in or around water, **an adult should be within arm's length**, providing "touch supervision."

## 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. Likewise, avoid wearing bright, flowery print clothing.
- To remove a visible stinger from skin, gently scrape it off horizontally with a credit card or your fingernail.
- **Combination sunscreen/insect repellent** products **should be AVOIDED** because sunscreen needs to be reapplied every two hours, but the insect repellent should be applied only **once daily**.
- Insect repellents containing **DEET** are most effective against ticks, which can transmit Lyme Disease, and mosquitoes, which can transmit West Nile Virus and other viruses.
- Insect repellents containing **DEET** with a concentration of **10%** appear to be **as safe as** products with a concentration of **30%** when used according to the directions on the product labels. DEET is **NOT** recommended for use on children **under 2 months of age**.
- **Ten percent DEET only protects for about 30 minutes** – inadequate for most outings. As the concentration of DEET increases, the duration of activity increases; for example, a concentration of about **24% has been shown to provide an average of 5 hours of protection**.
- The concentration of DEET varies significantly from product to product, so **READ THE LABEL** of any product you purchase. DEET should **not be applied under clothing** and washed off when back indoors.

## BICYCLE SAFETY

- Take your child with you when you shop for the bike, so that he or she can try it out. The value of a properly fitting bike far outweighs the value of surprising your child with a new one.
- Buy a bike that is the right size, not one your child has to "grow into." Oversized bikes are especially dangerous.
- Your child needs to wear a helmet on every bike ride, no matter how short or how close to home. Many accidents happen in driveways, on sidewalks, and on bike paths, not just on streets. Children learn best by observing you. Whenever you ride, put on your helmet.
- When purchasing a helmet, look for a label or sticker that says the helmet meets the CPSC safety standard.
- A helmet protects your child from serious injury, and should always be worn. And remember, wearing a helmet at all times helps children develop the helmet habit.
- A helmet should be worn so that it is level on the head, not tipped forwards or backwards. The strap should be securely fastened, and you should not be able to move the helmet in any direction. If needed, the helmet's sizing pads can help improve the fit.

## LAWN MOWER SAFETY

- Try to use a mower with a control that stops the mower from moving forward if the handle is let go.
- Children younger than 16 years should not be allowed to use ride-on mowers. Children younger than 12 years should not use walk-behind mowers.
- Make sure that sturdy shoes (not sandals or sneakers) are worn while mowing.
- Prevent injuries from flying objects, such as stones or toys, by picking up objects from the lawn before mowing begins. Have anyone who uses a mower wear hearing and eye protection.
- Do not pull the mower backward or mow in reverse unless absolutely necessary, and carefully look for children behind you when you mow in reverse.
- Always turn off the mower and wait for the blades to stop completely before removing the grass catcher, unclogging the discharge chute, or crossing gravel paths, roads, or other areas.
- Do NOT allow children to ride as passengers on ride-on mowers!!

## FIREWORKS SAFETY

- Fireworks can result in severe burns, scars and disfigurement that can last a lifetime.
- Fireworks that are often thought to be safe, such as sparklers, can reach temperatures above 1000 degrees Fahrenheit, and can burn users and bystanders.
- Families should attend community fireworks displays run by professionals rather than using fireworks at home.
- The AAP recommends prohibiting public sale of all fireworks, including those by mail or the Internet.

## ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES

- Children who are not licensed to drive a car should not be allowed to operate off-road vehicles.
- Because their nervous systems and judgment have not fully developed, off-road vehicles are particularly dangerous for children younger than 16 years.
- Don't ride double! Passengers are frequently injured when riding ATV's.
- All riders should wear helmets, eye protection and protective reflective clothing. Appropriate helmets are those designed for motorcycle (not bicycle) use, and should include safety visors/face shields for eye protection.
- ATVs lack the common safety equipment found on all cars and trucks that are designed for street use. Parents should never permit nighttime riding or street use of off-road vehicles.
- Flags, reflectors and lights should be used to make vehicles more visible.
- Drivers of recreational vehicles should not drive while under the influence of alcohol, drugs or even some prescription medicines. Parents should set an example for their children in this regard.