

SUMMER SAFETY PRIMER

Fun In The Sun

Babies under 6 months:

- Avoiding sun exposure and dressing infants in lightweight long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and brimmed hats are still the top recommendations to prevent sunburn. When adequate clothing and shade are not available, parents can apply a minimal amount of sunscreen to small areas, such as the infant's face and the back of the hands.

For Young Children:

- Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going outside, and use sunscreen even on cloudy days. The SPF (sun protection factor) should be at least 15.

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 avoid sun exposure during the peak intensity hours - between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or greater. Be sure to apply enough sunscreen - about one ounce per sitting for a young adult.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours, or after swimming or sweating.

Heat Stress in Exercising Children

- The intensity of activities that last 15 minutes or more should be reduced whenever high heat and humidity reach critical levels.
- At the beginning of a strenuous exercise program or after traveling to a warmer climate, the intensity and duration of exercise should be limited initially and then gradually increased during a period of 10 to 14 days to accomplish acclimatization to the heat.
- Before prolonged physical activity, the child should be well-hydrated. During the activity, periodic drinking should be enforced, for example, each 20 minutes, 5 oz of cold tap water or a flavored sports drink for a child weighing 88 lbs, and 9 oz for an adolescent weighing 132 lbs, even if the child does not feel thirsty.
- Clothing should be light-colored and lightweight and limited to one layer of absorbent material to facilitate evaporation of sweat. Sweat-saturated garments should be replaced by dry garments.

Pool Safety

- Never leave children alone in or near the pool, even for a moment.
- Omaha city ordinance instructs that all private pools must have at least a five foot seven inch tall fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate. The latch should be too high for children to reach.
- Also recommended is a power safety cover that can be placed over the water when the pool is not in use.
- Keep rescue equipment by the pool and be sure a phone is poolside with emergency numbers posted. Knowing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) can be a lifesaver. CPR classes are available at the National Safety Council, call 896-0454 for more information.
- 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.
- Avoid dressing your child in clothing with bright colors or flowery prints.
- To remove a visible stinger from skin, gently scrape it off horizontally with a credit card or your fingernail.
- Insect repellents containing DEET are the most effective.
- The concentration of DEET in products may range from less than 10 percent to over 30 percent. The benefits of DEET reach a peak at a concentration of 30 percent, the maximum concentration currently recommended for infants and children. DEET should not be used on children under 2 months of age.

Playground Safety

- Supervise children on play equipment to make sure they are safe!
- Install and maintain a shock-absorbing surface under and around the play equipment. Use at least 9 inches of wood chips, mulch, or shredded rubber for play equipment up to 7 feet high. If sand or pea gravel is used, install at least a 9-inch layer for play equipment up to 5 feet high.
- Carefully maintain all equipment - open "s" hooks or protruding bolt ends can be hazardous.
- Swing seats should be made of soft materials such as rubber, plastic or canvas.
- Make sure children cannot reach any moving parts that might pinch or trap any body part.
- Never attach-or allow children to attach-ropes, jump ropes, leashes, or similar items to play equipment; children can strangle on these.
- Make sure metal slides are cool to prevent children's legs from getting burned.
- Children shouldn't wear sports helmets while on playground equipment - this is a strangulation hazard.

Bicycle Safety

- Do not push your child to ride a 2-wheeled bike until he or she is ready. Consider the child's coordination and desire to learn to ride. Stick with coaster (foot) brakes until your child is older and more experienced.
- Buy a bike that is the right size, not one your child has to "grow into." Oversized bikes are especially dangerous.
- Children need to wear a helmet on every bike ride, no matter how short. Accidents happen in driveways, on sidewalks and on bike paths, not just on streets. Children learn best by observing you. When you ride your bike, wear 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 forward or backward. The strap should be securely fastened, and should not move in any direction.

Skateboard and Scooter Safety

- Children should never ride skateboards or scooters in or near traffic.

- All skateboarders and scooter-riders should always wear a helmet and other protective gear - even when if they are not attempting tricks.
- Communities should continue to develop skateboard parks, which are more likely to be monitored for safety than ramps and jumps constructed by children at home.

Lawn Mower Safety

- 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 use ride-on mowers. Children younger than 12 years should not use walk-behind mowers.
- Wear 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. When using 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, i.e. sparklers, can reach temperatures above 1000 degrees Fahrenheit, and can burn users and bystanders.
- Families should attend professional fireworks displays rather than using fireworks at home.

Boating Safety

- Children must wear life jackets at all times on boats or near bodies of water.
- Make sure the life jacket is the right size for your child. The jacket should not be loose. It should always be worn as instructed with all straps belted.
- Blow-up water wings, toys, rafts and air mattresses should never be used as life jackets or life preservers.
- Adults should wear life jackets for their own protection, and to set a good example.
- Never boat when under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

Open Water Swimming

- Make sure your child knows never to swim alone.
- A lifeguard (or other adult trained adult) needs to be watching children whenever they are in or near the water.
- Make sure your child knows never to dive into water except when permitted by an adult who knows the depth of the water and who has checked for underwater objects.
- Never let your child swim in canals or any fast moving water.
- Younger children should be closely supervised while in the water - use “touch supervision,” keeping no more than an arm’s length away.

Adapted from American Academy of Pediatrics