

Preparing Kids for Summer

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“Hot fun in the summertime” is a great tune to hum this time of year. The weather’s turning warm, the days are long and our young ones are unfettered to bike, swim, run, hike, hop, and enjoy the spoils of the season. This is also a great time for parents and babysitters to take refresher lessons on summer smarts and safety.

Here are some quick and easy tips to ensure kids have a safe, healthy, injury-free and fun summer:

Hydration and common sense food choices: When the weather’s warm and/or we increase our physical activity, we all perspire more. Help your family ensure they each get enough liquids. Avoid snacks with high sugar content by having the season’s fruit choices available.

Vaccines: Figures released earlier this month by the Oregon Public Health Division show a growing number of families in Oregon are not immunizing their children. This is concerning to experts who say the illnesses that vaccines prevent pose a real threat to the public's health.

Two recent cases of measles in Clark County, Washington and a recent case in Clatsop County of pertussis, also known as whooping cough, bring this very issue home. Don’t wait until back-to-school time to get your children updated on their vaccines. This is the best way to prevent illness in your children, other family members and yourself.

Watch sun exposure: Especially important for infants and young children, all family members should use sun block. On both sunny and cloudy days, use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or greater that protects against UVA and UVB rays. Despite labels, sunscreen should not be considered waterproof. Apply afresh after water or sweaty activities.

Pool and water safety: Swimming, splashing, and cool, refreshing water looks appealing to all ages. But lack of attention and failing to apply good safety practices results in more accidents and deaths than any other summer pastime. When it comes to pools, lakes, rivers and oceans, common sense rules still apply. Invest in swimming lessons for all members of the family. Remember to never leave children alone in or near the pool or spa.

Children should wear proper fitting life jackets at all times when on boats or near bodies of water.

Stranger danger: The breeze is light and the doors and windows are open, leaving your home more vulnerable to intruders. Make sure all locks and safety latches on windows and doors are defensible and protect your home as intended.

Remove dangers in the home: Use the summer break to give your cabinets a spring cleaning. Move chemicals, cleaning agents, household products and medicines out of reach of children. Even seemingly safe items such as mouthwash, hairspray and nail polish remover have toxins. Store them out of reach, in locked cabinets. The same goes with the garage and storage sheds.

Lock away guns and beware of fireworks: Ensure that firearms and even 4th of July fireworks are safely stored and away from reach from the family's younger members. Lock firearms and remove the ammunition.

Do a home safety check: Make sure the batteries in smoke detectors are in working order. The hotter, drier weather and barbecues pose more fire danger so make sure your home is fireproofed and assemble a family escape plan in case of a house fire.

Watch Fido: Pets need to be monitored, too, for signs of dehydration or heat stroke. Make sure your pet is leashed and that your animal is trained and safe with others.

Remember CPR: Also, bone up on your safety skills by refreshing your CPR training, assembling a home first aid kit that's easily accessible and keep important numbers near your phone in case you or a babysitter needs them in a hurry.

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