

Make It a Safe Summer!

By Woodland Publishing, Inc.

Summer is finally here, and that means fun. But without the right precautions, summer can also be very dangerous. Follow these tips to make this summer a safe one for your entire family.

Ride Safely

1. Wear a comfortable, properly fitted helmet that is approved by an independent testing lab. The helmet should sit level on top of the head and should not rock in any direction. Always fasten the safety strap.
2. Use safety gear (wrist guards, elbow pads and kneepads) that fits properly and does not interfere with movement, vision or hearing. Bike and scooter riders should not wear wrist guards because they may affect the riders' ability to maneuver.
3. Ride only on smooth, paved surfaces and ride only during daylight hours.
4. Learn to use the proper hand signals when you turn or stop.
5. Come to a complete stop before entering driveways, paths or sidewalks. Look left, right and left again to check for traffic.

Swim Safely

1. Build a fence (at least four feet high) around home pools. The gate should open out from the pool and should have a self-closing latch that children can't reach.
2. *Never* leave children alone in or near a pool.
3. Keep rescue equipment (made of fiberglass or other materials that do not conduct electricity) and a phone near the pool.
4. Have children who are still learning to swim wear a Coast Guard approved life jacket. Avoid inflatable aids such as water wings, which can suddenly shift position, lose air or slip out from underneath the child.
5. Always wear a life jacket when boating or fishing.

Play Safely

1. Reduce the intensity of an activity when the temperature or the humidity increases.
2. Stay well hydrated. During physical activity, drink five to nine ounces of cold water or sports drink every 20 minutes. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which dehydrate the body.
3. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.
4. Stay in the shade whenever possible, especially during the peak sun intensity hours (10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.).
5. Wear a hat with a three-inch brim or a forward-facing bill, and sunglasses that block 99 percent to 100 percent of the sun's ultraviolet rays.
6. Wear sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or greater. Reapply it every two hours, or after swimming or sweating.
7. Make sure playground equipment is safe and carefully maintained. Metal slides should be cool (to prevent children's legs from burns), swing seats should be made of soft materials (such as rubber, plastic or canvas) and all equipment should be safety tested.
8. Never allow children to attach ropes, leashes or similar items to play equipment. They can strangle on these.
9. Never purchase a home trampoline or allow your children to use one.

Celebrate Safely

1. Avoid combination sunscreen/insect repellent products; sunscreen should be reapplied, insect repellent should not.
2. Avoid areas where bugs congregate, such as stagnant pools of water, uncovered foods and gardens where flowers are in bloom.

3. Avoid the health risks associated with DEET (a common ingredient in insect repellants) with the following natural insect repellants:
4. Plant marigolds. The flowers give off a smell that bugs do not like.
5. Mix equal parts of pure vanilla (not extract) and water. Store the mixture in a spray bottle sprayer and use it to repel mosquitoes and ticks. You'll smell like a cookie instead of a chemical plant!
6. In a four-ounce container, mix 20 drops each of eucalyptus oil and cedarwood oil, ten drops each of tea tree oil and geranium oil, and two ounce of a carrier oil (such as jojoba). Apply to skin as needed, avoiding the eye area. Test the mixture on a small area of skin for sensitivities and keep it out of the reach of children.
7. Bug proof your yard by regularly spraying your plants with a soap and water solution. Use a hose-end sprayer filled with one cup of any dishwashing soap for grass or one tablespoon of soap for other plants. This will dehydrate and kill most bugs without chemicals.
8. Always supervise a grill when in use, and keep children and pets away.
9. Leave fireworks to the professionals.

Follow these tips to protect yourself and make this summer safe and full of fun!