

Safe Summer Fun



There are many things parents can do to prepare for outside play during these hot summer days. At Parkside Pediatrics, we offer several recommendations for our parents:

- **SUNSCREEN**

- **When?** - No matter what the activity, if anyone – kids or adults – plan on being outside for more than 10 minutes, they should have on sunscreen. Apply at least 15-30 minutes before exposure and be sure to wash off all sunscreen before going to bed.
- **Babies** – Be careful to limit sun exposure and when applying sunscreen, DO NOT put anywhere near their mouth, eyes or hands. Babies tend to rub their eyes and put fingers in their mouths. Put them in wide brimmed hats if possible. Also, be sure to use sunscreens made for babies. These do not contain certain oils that in some babies could cause an adverse reaction.
- **SPF** - We recommend the highest SPF you can find and waterproof is the best, even if you don't plan on swimming. Many sunscreens go up to a 70 or even 100 SPF. There are also many types of clothing available for swimming that have a sun protection factor. If using these, you still need to put on sunscreen.
- **Areas to protect** – Be sure to protect all areas that are exposed. Many people forget to apply to the top of the head, back of the neck, ears and even tops of feet. All those can burn quickly.
- **What to do and when to see your pediatrician?** Do not apply any sort of gel or Vaseline to the burned skin. This actually seals the burn and makes it worse. It is fine to give Motrin or Tylenol for pain. If any portion of the skin is bright red, begins to blister or a rash appears it is important to see your pediatrician. There are prescription creams and other things that can help a severe burn.

- **Overheating, dehydration and blood sugar**

- **OVER HEATING** – The hotter the day, the more frequent the breaks.
 - Babies – babies overheat quickly. Car seats and strollers are made to protect your baby and they do not circulate the air well. Take baby out frequently to cool off. Put them in cool clothing and hats, we do not recommend using blankets in hot temps. Let them play with a cool wash cloth too!
- **HYDRATION** - STAYING HYDRATED is critical! Have kids take a break from play time to get water or even a fun treat like popsicles. We do not recommend soft drinks or lots of juice because of the significant quantity of sugar. Many times when kids are playing they can lose track of time. Set your phone, watch or even kitchen timer to remind yourself and the kids to take a break.
 - **Moms** – *especially those who are nursing* – remember to keep you hydrated as well.

- **Blood Sugar** – Kids playing hard don't realize they are hungry or in the summer it seems "too hot" to eat. This is an important thing to keep in mind as a parent. We have all had our kids come to us and they feel sick and don't know why or who are just "starving!" Many times this is because their blood sugar has dropped. To help avoid this, make sure they are getting a good balanced breakfast and not just pancakes and syrup. Also, keep snacks handy and plan snack breaks throughout the day and play time to protect against a sugar low. Fruit is a great snack for hydration and maintaining blood sugar.
- **What to do and when to see your pediatrician?** – If you suspect your child is overheated, dehydrated or is experiencing a significant drop in their blood sugar, get some sort of liquid in them immediately. In these cases, we suggest a sports drink or juice since they provide a rapid recovery because of the sugar content. If your child doesn't "perk up" after 10-15 minutes, you might want to call your pediatrician. Severe dehydration, overheating and low blood sugar, are ALL serious and if left untreated can be fatal.
- **POOLS** It is easy to lose track of time while in the pool. Plan for breaks, snacks and sunscreen!
 - **Hydration** - Being in a pool definitely helps kids stay cooler, however they run the risk of dehydration because of the continuous physical activity. Remember to take frequent breaks and hydrate.
 - **Sunscreen** – Even though it says "waterproof" it isn't. Reapply!
 - **Ears** – Protect your child's ears from the water by using custom ear molds or generic ear plugs.
 - **Exhaustion** It is very important to keep your eyes on all kids in the pool, even if they are "good swimmers." When kids play in the pool they don't notice their body's cues as well as they might in a normal situation. Look out for kids who are getting tired, who might not be feeling well or simply need to take a break. These kids need to rest, rehydrate and sometimes need a snack.
- **Bites, Stings, Cuts and Scrapes** We live in the south and there are bugs! This should not stop your kids and yourself from getting that much needed outside play time. Accidents will also happen, be prepared.
 - **First AID** - Keep a first aid kit handy and stocked for any bites, stings and minor cuts and scrapes. Also, something to help with itching is always good like an After Bite cream or Benadryl. The American Red Cross is a great resource for first aid check lists and information.
 - **Bug Spray** – If needed, you can apply bug spray before going out to play. Do it outside because it is well ventilated. In small children, apply it to their socks, shoes and even strollers for babies. NEVER near the face or hands. There are even bug repellents that come in a wipe that helps with application. WASH off all repellent before eating and bed time.
 - **Safety** – Before you turn the kids loose to play, survey your yard and play area for:
 - Fire ant mounds and wasp nests- treat before kids play in the area
 - Any safety concerns – broken fences, gates, playground equipment, etc.
 - **What to do and when to see your pediatrician?** Call your pediatrician immediately if a cut doesn't stop bleeding after cleaning and applying a bandage or you see any signs of allergic reaction to a bite or sting. These include excessive redness, swelling or rash. If there is ANY SIGN OF breathing trouble, call 911.

The most important thing is to HAVE FUN. Get your kids moving.

One of the most harmful things you can do is allow your child to sit in front of a screen all day.

Go on a walk, have an outdoor adventure, just PLAY!