

H PEDIATRIC UNIT

Summer Safety

Get out your shades and beach towels, the summer is fast approaching! I encourage you to keep a few important health tips in mind to thoroughly enjoy all the fun summer has to offer.

Sun safety is about more than avoiding sunburns. The sun's rays can cause other damage, such as making your skin age and increasing your risk for skin cancer. That's why it's so important to be careful with sun safety, especially for children. In fact, the littlest ones (babies under six months old) should stay away from direct sunlight completely by staying covered while outside. All others can take these precautions. Try to stay out of direct sunlight from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. when the sun's rays are the strongest. If you are going to be in the sun, cover up! Large hats and protective clothing can go a long way toward reducing sun damage along with sunglasses with UV-protection for the eyes.



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Apply sunscreen to any exposed skin. Look for sunscreen that's SPF 15 or greater with the words "broad-spectrum" on the label (to cover both UVA and UVB rays from the sun). Remember to reapply sunscreen every two hours, right after rigorous activities or swimming.

Speaking of swimming, water safety is crucial to having fun in and around the water. Approximately 1,000 children drown every year and many more are seriously injured in water accidents. Toddlers are especially at high risk – drowning is the second leading cause of death for children ages 1-4. Fencing or other barriers around pools, ponds and any other open water are very helpful for preventing unsupervised access. Remember, drownings can happen in as little as a few inches of water. When playing in the pool or at the beach, keep toddlers within arm's reach at all times and a close eye on older children, even if they know how to swim. Drownings can happen very quickly, which is why direct adult supervision is so important. Approved life jackets should be worn, but are not a replacement for supervision. Swimming lessons can substantially reduce the risk of drowning for all children and are recommended for all children ages 4 and up, but you can consider starting swimming lessons as early as age 1 for toddlers who appear ready.

For more information on these and other topics, visit www.healthychildren.org. This is a great resource for parents with material vetted by pediatricians.

Should a situation arise in which summer fun gets out of hand and your child gets hurt, remember Hendricks Regional Health has a pediatric unit in Danville specially designed to treat children. From the doctors to the nurses to the respiratory therapists, our experienced staff is trained to care for all ages from birth to 18 years. You will find the high-quality, compassionate care you need here at Hendricks Regional Health.