

Health Unit

Media Release

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Keep your kids healthy and safe this summer!

Summer is here! For most children, this means more outdoor activities: playing outside, swimming, biking, camping etc. For parents, this means paying extra attention in order to keep your child safe and healthy. Here are tips to make your child's summer safer:

Sun Safety

- Apply sunscreen (SPF 15 or greater) 15-30 minutes before going out in the sun. Reapply frequently and generously.
- Send your child off to play with a hat, protective clothing, sunglasses and sunscreen.
- Plan for shade in your child's play area. Trees and shade structures are a great way to do this.
- Try to keep children out of the sun during the peak hours of 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. when the sun's rays are strongest. Plan outdoor activities in the early morning or evening.
- Don't be fooled by cloud cover. 80% of the sun's rays can still penetrate light clouds, mist and fog.

Reinforce basic sun safety everywhere your child goes! Remember that sunscreens are not adequate protection on their own. They should be used with other forms of protection like clothing, hats and shade.

Injury Prevention - *Water Safety*

- Always stay within sight and reach of your child when they are in or near water.
- Get trained in CPR, first aid, water rescue and swimming skills
- Young children under five years of age and weak swimmers should wear lifejackets when they are in, on or around the water.
- Always check the depth of the water the first time you enter and check for hazards.

Injury Prevention - *Bike Safety*

- Make sure the helmet fits your child. The helmet should rest two finger widths above the eyebrow. The side and chin straps should be snug.
- People of all ages should wear a helmet. You are your child's best role model.
- Ensure your child's bike is in good working order.
- Children under 10 should not ride on the road. Teach your child the rules of the road before riding independently.

Healthy Lunches

- Include foods from at least 3 or 4 of the food groups from Canada's Food Guide
- Pack water and 100% fruit juices to keep your child hydrated during those hot summer days. A thermos bottle, can keep these beverages cold for several hours.
- Encourage your child to drink throughout the day, even if they don't feel very thirsty.
- Lead by example - clean your hands often, especially before preparing food and eating. Encourage your child to do the same.
- Keep hot food hot and cold food cold! Put a plastic container of ice, ice pack, or a frozen juice box in your child's lunch.

Remember: Good safety practices are easy to learn and can keep your child safe and healthy! For more information, visit www.healthunit.org or call the Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853.