

Summer Safety

Summer, for many Red Deer families a much anticipated vacation from the cold. We plan beach days, barbecues and trips to the zoo and in the midst of our excitement we may forget the dangers that come along with summer fun.

DON'T GET BURNED

Did you know that spending too much time in the sun without the proper clothing, sunscreen or fluids can allow children to become over heated, dehydrated and in some cases seriously burned? To keep our children safe in the sun we should always remember to have them wear a protective hat with a brim, sunscreen with a minimum SPF 30, loose cotton clothing and wrap around sun glasses. Children should drink plenty of fluids especially water and if possible stay indoors or in a shady spot between 10am and 2pm as this is when the sun is at it's hottest.

BUZZ OFF

Mosquitoes and other pesky insects can be very annoying. At best when bitten they can leave an itchy mark children do not enjoy. At worst they can leave rare diseases like West Nile. In order to minimize our children's risk to insect bites it is important to apply repellent before they go outside. It is important to remember that insect repellents contain a chemical called DEET, this keeps the insects away. This can be harmful if too much is absorbed into the child's skin. The following are some tips for safe application:

1. Always read the labels before applying
2. Never let children apply their own repellent
3. Avoid application to irritated sun burnt areas
4. If using spray ensure your child's eyes and mouth are closed
5. Never apply repellent to children under 6 months of age.

The next time you are out shopping look for products with low DEET, that are water proof, and non toxic. Some products are available in plenty of fun colors.

WATER SAFETY FACTS

Did you know that every summer drowning is the leading cause of death for Canadian children ages one to four? A small child can drown in only a few inches of water, enough to cover the mouth and nose. According to the Canadian Red Cross, home swimming pools account for 38% of toddler drownings. Since 1991, only 4% of toddler drownings were in home swimming pools that self closing and self latching gates. If all home pools were equipped with these latching gates many toddler drownings could be eliminated. Remember when swimming with your toddler; ensure they have a (PFD) personal flotation device such as a life jacket. Remember one adult per child and to never leave your child alone in the water for any reason.

Stay safe and have a wonderful summer.

By Angela Davis

Angela Davis is a home visitor with Family Services of Central Alberta, your Parent Link Centre.