



Staying safe during summer activities

School is out and families will soon be heading outside to enjoy summer activities. Texas Children's Health Plan wants to give you some important tips on keeping your family safe wherever you go this summer.

Sun safety

The first and best line of defense against the sun is covering up.

- Wear a hat with a 3-inch brim or a bill facing forward.
- Use sunglasses that block 99-100% of UV rays.
- Wear cotton clothing with a tight weave.
- Use sunscreen with a sun protection

factor (SPF) of 15 or greater whenever your child is in the sun.

- Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going outside.
- Re-apply sunscreen every two to three hours and after your child has been sweating or swimming.
- Apply waterproof sunscreen if your child will be around water or will go swimming. Waterproof sunscreens may last up to 80 minutes in the water. Re-apply when your child comes out of the water
- You should avoid sun exposure during peak hours of 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
- Drink lots of water to stay hydrated.

Playground safety

- Playground equipment is usually separated for younger and older children. Keep your child on the equipment that is right for his or her age and height.
- Make sure equipment is dry. Wet surfaces can make your child slip and fall.
- Have your child wear shoes on the playground and make sure they are tied.
- Don't let children play barefoot on the playground. They could get a splinter or a cut.
- Only one person should be on the slide at one time.

Be prepared for the 2006 hurricane season

Hurricane season begins June 1st and runs through November 30th. Do you and your family know what to do in case of a hurricane?

Before hurricane season, make sure you have all the supplies on hand that you'll need in an emergency. Prepare your disaster supply kit and check your stock of non-perishable food, drinking water, batteries, diapers and formula for babies, and pet food.

If you are asked to evacuate, plan where you will go and how you will get there. Evacuation route maps are available online, or call your county Office of Emergency Management.

Make sure to fill up your vehicle with gas before you evacuate. You may be on the

road for hours and gas may not be available along evacuation routes.

If you are not told to evacuate, secure your home by closing and boarding windows. Tape is not enough to protect your windows in strong winds. Secure outdoor objects that may be blown away or uprooted. During the storm, stay in an interior room on the lowest floor.

After the storm, do not drive unless it is absolutely necessary. Stay away from riverbanks, bayous, streams, flooded roads and washed-out bridges. Do not allow children to play in floodwaters. Poisonous snakes, fire ants and other animals may have been swept into the water. Water also may be contaminated with raw sewage.

(Source: www.click2houston.com, 2005 Hurricane and Flood Survival Guide)

Disaster Supply Kit

- Portable battery-powered radio or TV
- Flashlights
- Batteries
- First-aid kit
- Credit cards and cash
- Personal identification
- Drinking water
- 3-day supply of canned food
- Manual can opener
- Personal hygiene items
- Prescription medications and other special needs, like formula and diapers
- Pet supplies and identification
- Important papers

Store a week's supply of non-perishable food at home. Keep at least a gallon of water per person per day for three days on hand. Also fill bathtubs and sinks with water to use to wash and flush toilets.

Preventing cellulitis in children

Cellulitis is an infection at the deepest layer of the skin. This infection is caused by bacteria which can get into your body through broken skin such as a cut, scratch, animal bite, or a bug bite if you scratch it.

Usually, when you get a scratch or bug bite, just the top layer of the skin is affected and it will clear up on its own. If the area develops an infection, it may just be at the top layers of the skin. But if the infection goes deeper, it becomes cellulitis and all three layers of the skin can become red, swollen and tender. Cellulitis can occur anywhere on the body, most often on the legs, face or arms.

Some symptoms of cellulitis include tenderness, pain, swelling and redness at the

site of infection. If the infection spreads, you may have fever and chills along with swollen lymph nodes. If you notice any of these symptoms in your child, call your child's pediatrician or nurse.

It is important to take precautions while outside. Use bug repellent if your child will be playing outside. Try to prevent your child from picking at old scabs and scratching the areas that have been bitten by mosquitoes or insects. Wash the areas with soap and water and use an antibiotic or an anti-itch cream or lotion. Cut your child's fingernails so that germs and bacteria can't be carried to other parts of the body. If your child cuts or scrapes himself, be sure to wash the area with soap and water.

Parents and children should practice water safety

On average, more than 385 children drowned or almost drowned each day last year. Most of the accidents happened between Memorial Day and Labor Day. One or both parents were watching 70 percent of the preschoolers who drowned.

A child can drown in seconds in very little water. To help families avoid water accidents, follow these tips:

- Never leave children alone in or near any body of water. Dangers include

bathtubs, spas, wading pools and mopping buckets.

- Learn CPR. If a parent knows Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), a child has a better chance of surviving a drowning.
- Keep a telephone and emergency equipment (like life preservers and life jackets) near the water.
- Teach your children to swim. Children should know how to swim safely in pools and natural bodies of water.

Upcoming Events

Annual Back-to-School Event

Texas Children's Health Plan's Annual Back-to-School Event will be held at Tinsely Elementary this year. Come to the free event to get your child's immunizations, vision and hearing tested. You and your child can also learn about bike safety. Free school supplies will be given out on a first-come first-served basis. Enjoy clowns, music, a bike rodeo, door prizes and more!

When: Saturday, July 22, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Where: Tinsely Elementary School
11035 Bob White Drive
Houston, TX 77096

Call 1-800-990-8247 for information.

- Children should use approved flotation devices, like life jackets when on boats or playing near bodies of water.
- Children need to understand jumping or diving into water can hurt them.

Teenagers and parents should follow all water-safety tips, too. Teach your teenager about the dangers of substance abuse combined with swimming, diving and boating. Teenagers should also learn CPR and be taught never to swim alone.

Do you know when to take your child to the emergency room?

Most problems aren't serious enough for you to take your child to the emergency room (ER). So, how do you know when to take your child to the ER, when to see your child's pediatrician or when you can treat the child at home?

An emergency is when your child is in an immediate life-or-death situation, in serious pain, has stopped breathing or is having seizures. You need to call 911 or take your child to the nearest ER.

Some examples of emergency conditions include when your child has:

- A lot of bleeding that doesn't stop after 10 minutes of pressure

- Been molested, raped, beaten, stabbed
- Breathing difficulties
- Broken bones
- Coughing up or throwing up blood
- Had a direct blow to the head
- Lost consciousness
- Severe allergic reaction
- Severe animal bite
- Severe burn
- Severe dehydration (unable to urinate for 12 hours or more, sunken eyes)

The emergency room shouldn't be used as your primary care doctor for your child. Your child can be exposed to a lot more illnesses when in the ER. Non-emergency conditions include when your child has a cold, fever, sore

throat, earache, diarrhea or vomiting.

Many of these conditions can lead to more serious problems, so it is important that you treat them, but you can treat these conditions with the help of your doctor without having to go to the emergency room.

Find a doctor that you can take your child to when he or she is sick or needs checkups and immunizations. Your child's doctor will know how to best care for your child.

Also, most pediatricians have a phone number for you to call for after-hours help. You can call this number or your pediatrician's office anytime to get help from a nurse or the doctor on call.