

How to keep your kids out of the ER this summer

July 5 2017



(HealthDay)—Make sure safety is part of kids' summer fun.

"With kids spending more [time outdoors](#), there is more opportunity for everything from [broken bones](#), sprains, strains and lacerations, to [tick bites](#) and [heat stroke](#)," said Dr. James Dwyer, director of [emergency medicine](#) at Northern Westchester Hospital in Mount Kisco, N.Y.

"Accidents will happen, but there are many steps parents can take to help prevent injuries without spoiling the fun," he added in a hospital news release.

Children should always wear shoes. "When kids shed their shoes, they are at risk for splinters and cuts from broken glass as well as tick bites," Dwyer said, adding that foot cuts are among the most common summer injuries his hospital treats.

When bicycling, skateboarding or inline skating, children should wear proper safety gear. That includes a helmet as well as wrist, elbow and knee pads.

Trampoline injuries are also common during the summer, and some cause lasting damage. The American Academy of Pediatrics urges parents not to let their kids use home trampolines.

Ticks are another threat. They can cause illnesses such as Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. When walking or hiking in the woods, wear long sleeves and long pants tucked into your socks, and use insect repellent that contains DEET. When you come inside, check skin and clothing for ticks, then shower, Dwyer advised.

Children should also drink plenty of water and avoid overexertion to prevent heat-related illness.

If you have a swimming pool, it should be fenced with a gate that locks. When kids are swimming, an attentive adult should be present.

"Swimming lessons are essential for children who are not strong swimmers," Dwyer said. "A Coast Guard approved life vest should be worn until the child can safely swim in deep water without assistance."

Never leave a child unattended in a car.

"The temperature inside a vehicle can rise so quickly that it can kill a child in as little as 15 minutes. Be mindful when there is a change in your morning routine or if you are distracted by other events in your life, because that's when a moment's inattention can turn into a tragedy," Dwyer said.

More information: The American Academy of Pediatrics has more on [summer safety](#).

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Citation: How to keep your kids out of the ER this summer (2017, July 5) retrieved 29 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-07-kids-er-summer.html>

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