

Here's how to make summer sports camp a safe adventure for your kid

July 19 2023, by Cara Murez



If your child is in sports camp this summer, you'll want them to have fun

and stay safe.

The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) offers some tips on dealing with existing [medical conditions](#), staying hydrated and heat safe, avoiding weather dangers and protecting skin from the sun.

"Just as parents don't drop off their [children](#) at a pool without a lifeguard, they shouldn't send [young athletes](#) to camp without this vital information," said [Scott Sailor](#), former president of NATA, in an association news release.

Before camp, make sure your [child](#) has had a [physical exam](#) and that you've completed any questionnaires about existing medical conditions and medications, NATA recommends.

If your child takes medication regularly, find out who will be in charge of administering it.

Also, double check that the medication will not cause adverse side effects from sun exposure or strenuous exercise.

Ask whether the camp has [medical insurance](#) in case of an injury, illness or accident, NATA recommends.

If your child's sport requires particular equipment, check it for proper fit and condition. Make sure new shoes and equipment are broken in.

Your child should take along a [water bottle](#) to stay hydrated during activities and in the dorm at night during sleep-away camp.

Pack towels and flip flops for showers. Remind your child not to share [water bottles](#) and towels to prevent spreading any illnesses.

It's important to know who's caring for your child. A dedicated [health care](#) professional should be at the camp, and medical decisions should be guided by this person, rather than a coach.

If your child has a medical condition, such as asthma, epilepsy, diabetes or allergy, meet with the athletic trainer or health care professional to talk about the condition and emergency treatment.

Coaches should have proper training and education on key health and [safety issues](#) in case an athletic trainer is not available, including CPR, automated external defibrillator (AED) and first aid training.

Defibrillators should be available on site.

Make sure the camp has an emergency action plan specific for every practice and game facility, NATA recommends.

It's always a good idea to think about heat safety and hydration. You can help your child acclimate to the heat one to two weeks before camp, working out in conditions similar to those they will experience in [camp](#), progressively.

Your child should always have water or sports drinks nearby in their own containers for ease.

Avoid dehydration and hyponatremia, which occurs when sodium levels in the blood are low, by telling your child to check on some key indicators.

This includes whether their urine is darker than the color of lemonade, if they are thirsty and if they are urinating less often than normal. Any of these can suggest they need to increase their fluid intake.

Let them choose their own flavors and keep beverages cool so they're

more likely to drink.

Food and rehydration beverages should include sufficient sodium to prevent or resolve imbalances that happen with sweating.

Your child should use sunscreen that has a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. It should be applied to dry skin 15 minutes before your child goes outside, even if the sun isn't out. It's important to reapply during breaks if they're swimming or sweating.

In some regions, it may be necessary to pay attention to whether lightning is predicted. Ask who's in charge of watching out for this.

Activity should stop if lightning starts and everyone should go inside, staying clear of water indoors, as well as appliances, electronics, open windows and doors.

Then, everyone should wait at least a half-hour after the last flash of lightning or clap of thunder to go back outside, NATA recommends.

More information: Safe Kids Worldwide has more [sports safety](#) tips for kids.

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