

# Four Tips to Make Summer Safe



Many families are heading outdoors for one last outing before school starts. Whether in the water or hills, on the ballfield or in the backyard, it's essential to keep family members safe from sun, insects, and injuries. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website includes information on family health. A summary of their tips for staying safe is included below. For additional information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/features/kidsafety/index.html>.

1. Master water safety. Swimming is a great way to cool off and get exercise; however, drowning is the leading cause of death among children ages 1 to 4.

- Supervise children at all times when in or around water.
- Teach kids to swim so they feel comfortable and confident in the water.
- Help prevent water illnesses. Talk to children about not

using the pool as a toilet, encourage bathroom breaks, and change toddlers' diapers often.

- Install a four-sided fence around home pools.
- While boating, kayaking, paddle boarding, or other water sports, make sure everyone wears a properly fitted life jacket.

2. Be sun smart. Even healthy children and adults can overheat or get sunstroke when participating in strenuous activities in hot weather. If someone shows signs of heat exhaustion, move them to a cool location and seek medical help. The CDC website includes a list of signs to watch for.

- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Schedule outdoor activities in the morning and evening hours.
- Seek shade. UV rays are most harmful midday. If you need to be outdoors, sit under a tree, bring an umbrella, or use a pop-up tent.
- Take cool baths or showers.
- Use sunscreen with at least SPF (sun protection factor) 15 and UVA (ultraviolet A) and UVB (ultraviolet B) protection when outdoors. A few severe sunburns can lead to skin cancer in the years ahead.
- Wear a hat and sunglasses to protect your scalp and eyes.

3. Protect against ticks and mosquitos. Zika, West Nile Virus, and Lyme disease can be transmitted by insects.

- Use an effective insect repellent. Products containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and some natural oils provide long-lasting protection. Acaricides (a pesticide) can reduce ticks, but shouldn't be relied on for complete protection.
- Check yourself and your children for ticks after being outdoors, especially if you have been camping or hiking. If you find a tick, instructions for effectively

removing it are available on the CDC website.

4. Prevent injuries. Falls at home and on the playground are common causes of injuries and trips to the emergency room.

- Make sure playgrounds are well-maintained and have soft landing areas.
- Wear appropriate protective gear when participating in sports.
- Teach family members basic first aid.
- Teach family members about potential fire hazards and what to do, whether camping or grilling in the backyard.

Enjoy the rest of summer, and stay safe out there!

By: Kathy Riggs, Utah State University Extension professor,  
Kathleen.Riggs@usu.edu