

Hazards of Summer

By: Laura Isaacson, OMS IV

Summer is fun times of year, but along with all of the fun activities come some hazards. Some of the ways to stay safe and healthy in the summer include avoiding sunburn, and being careful around water or when riding a bicycle.

Water safety: According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), there were 3,582 fatal unintentional drowning in the United States in 2005, averaging about ten deaths daily. Some of the major risk factors for drowning include: alcohol use, lack of barriers or supervision, and failure to wear a life jacket when boating or swimming in lakes or rivers. Here are some water safety tips:

Install a fence around your pool

Take swimming lessons, and always swim with a partner Always have an adult supervising children swimming

Wear a life jacket when boating or swimming in a lake or river

Avoid alcohol use while boating or swimming

Learn CPR

Sunburn: Increased exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays increases your risk of developing two types of skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma and malignant melanoma. UV rays are the strongest in the summer between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

A few serious sunburns can increase a child's risk of skin cancer later in life... It takes as little as 15 minutes for UV rays to damage unprotected skin, but it can take up to 12 hours for skin to show the full effects of the sunburn. Here are some easy tips to decrease your exposure to damaging UV rays:

Spend some time in the shade, especially during the late morning and early afternoon hours

Wear a wide-brim hat to cover your head, face, ears, and neck

Wear sunglasses that block as close to 100% of UVA and UVB rays as possible

Apply sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher.

Bicycle safety: In 2006 there were 776 bicyclist deaths, and over 44,000 bicyclist injuries. Over 140,000 children are treated in emergency departments each year for head injuries sustained while bicycling. The easiest and most important precaution to take is to wear a helmet whenever riding a bicycle. It is also important to follow the rules of the road, since drivers of vehicles may not see you. These include:

Riding on the right side of the road with the flow of traffic

Obeying traffic signs and signals

Sopping at all intersections and crosswalk

In addition, have children under age 10 ride on sidewalks and paths until they show good riding skills and are able to follow the rules of the road. Also wear reflective clothing if riding at dawn, dusk, or night, and make sure your bike has a headlight and a rear reflector.

So stay safe this summer by taking a few extra minutes to apply that sunscreen,

Put on that life jacket or bike helmet, and use common sense!

References:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/drown.htm>

<http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/facts/crash-facts.cfin>

<http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/facts/crash-facts.cfin>

http://www.cdc.gov/healthmarketing/entertainment_education/tips/headinjury.htm

http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/howto.htm

<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/chooseyourcover/guide.htm>