

School will soon be over for the year and summer vacation will be here. Spending more time outside in the summer sun means you will have to protect your skin from sunburn. Wearing sunglasses and a hat or visor are great ideas, but you should always wear sunscreen whenever you'll be outside. The longer your child is out, the more often you should reapply. Sunscreen prevents the sun's strongest rays from burning the skin. Avoid sun exposure during peak intensity hours of 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Use a sunscreen with an SPF 15 or greater, and make sure to use it even on cloudy days. Be careful to apply it everywhere. Don't forget the nose, ears, neck, lips, or feet!

One summer activity that you will need to reapply sunscreen often for is swimming. Swimming is fun and a great way to get exercise. But, safety is important. Everyone should learn how to swim. Remind your children to follow some important safety rules:

- * Always have a buddy. Never swim alone.
- * Never swim without an adult present.
- * Learn and follow the rules of the pool.
- * Always jump into the water feet first unless there's a diving board.
- * Get out of the water if you hear thunder or see lightening.

Another fun way to exercise during the summer is biking. However, staying safe should be a priority. Some things to consider for your children as you're dusting off the bike and getting ready for another season of use:

- Protect your head. Wear a helmet! - Head injuries cause most bicycle related deaths and can cause serious brain injury. The helmet should fit snugly and be comfortable. It should also be worn in the proper position. Get into the helmet habit.
- No playing on the road or riding on busy streets. – Teach your child about driveway safety. Always stop before entering the street and scan left and right for traffic. Obey traffic signs (stop at stop signs) and don't turn without warning. Ride on the right with the traffic.
- No riding at night. – This requires special equipment and skills that few children have.
- Make independent decisions. – Many car/bike accidents occur when children are following each other. Assess traffic situations for yourself and continue to obey all traffic laws.

Never forget, example is the best teacher. Making safety come first should bring your family many hours of bike riding fun!

Physical **in**activity is among the leading health risk behaviors in young people and adults. Regular physical activity helps build and maintain healthy bones and muscles. Physical inactivity can lead to children becoming overweight, which will increase their risk for heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. Besides...being active is fun! I see this as a win-win situation. As the summer vacation begins, let's focus on our children going out, exercising and increasing their activity level.

I wish you all a safe, happy, and memorable summer. See you in September!

Healthfully,
Maria Farley