

H PEDIATRIC UNIT

National Safety Month

June is National Safety Month. As a pediatrician, it's my goal to keep my patients and the children in Hendricks County safe. National Safety Month falls in June because of all the extra precautions that parents and caregivers need to be aware of during these warmer months to keep everyone safe and healthy, especially in the sun and around water.

Here are some helpful tips:

Water Safety

Swimming pools, lakes and water parks offer so much fun for kids and teenagers! It is important to remind ourselves to have multiple safety measures in place. Drowning can happen very quickly and is silent and is the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death in children ages 1 to 4 and the third leading cause in kids and teenagers ages 5 to 19. Drownings are more likely to occur in males (75%), during the months of May to August (70%) and between the hours of 4-6 p.m.



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Toddlers and small children:

- Swim lessons are recommended for children starting around age 1, but you can consult with your child's pediatrician to determine their readiness to begin.
- When children are near water, there should be an adult designated to always supervise them. This should be that adult's only job and they should not be consuming alcohol or other substances during that time. The adult should always be attentive and capable of intervention if needed.
- All children and adults should wear life jackets while on a boat.
- Private and community pools should have 4 feet of fencing with self-closing and self-latching gates. The pool should be completely isolated from the home and the rest of the yard.
- Drowning is not limited to summer activities. They can occur in bathtubs and large buckets of water. Children should never be left alone in the bathtub, even for a minute. Toilets should have child safety locks. All buckets should be emptied of water after use.

Teens and older children:

- Supervise boat use and insist on lifejacket use for all children (and adults!) while riding a boat.
- If your child will be attending summer camp, inquire about the proximity to water. Enroll your child in swimming lessons or find a camp that includes swim lessons as a part of the experience. Make sure the lifeguards on duty are certified. Inform the camp about the child's swimming skills as well as any medical conditions that make swimming dangerous, including seizures, heart rhythm problems or developmental delays.
- Talk with your teens about alcohol use, especially while boating/tubing/skiing/etc. Alcohol and water are a deadly combination.

Sun Safety

Children will inevitably spend time outdoors in the summer! Starting the routine of daily sunscreen regardless of weather will help protect them from sun damage and burns.

- The sun's intensity peaks between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Encourage playing in the shade as much as possible.
- Choose clothing that is cooling and protective against UV light. Consider sunglasses as well if your child will tolerate them. Encourage your children to wear a hat, especially with a brim, to protect their face, ears and neck.
- Apply sunscreen with at least SPF 15 and UVA and UVB (broad spectrum) protection every single time your child goes outside. Apply 30 minutes before going outdoors and don't forget the ears, nose, lips and feet. Reapply every 2 hours.
- Babies under 6 months should not wear sunscreen. They should be kept out of direct sunlight and dressed in lightweight clothing.
- Call your child's pediatrician if your child gets a sunburn that causes blistering or fever.

For more on this and other topics, head to www.healthychildren.org. This is a great resource for health tips designed for parents by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Should a situation arise in which your child needs to be admitted to a hospital, remember that Hendricks Regional Health's dedicated pediatric unit is staffed 24/7 to care for children from birth to 18 years. Learn more at hendricks.org/pediatrics.