



Speaking for Children

What's best for our youngest children is best for everyone!

Tips for summer safety

Summer is a great opportunity for families to spend quality time together. Whether it's playing in the park, hiking or building sandcastles on the beach, summer days can create memories that last a lifetime. But the hot season can also put young children at greater risk of injury. Always supervise children and follow these safety tips!

Be sun smart

A young child's skin is sensitive to the bright summer sun so be sure to avoid sunburns.

- Apply sunscreen with at least 30 SPF (sun protection factor) on your child's skin 15 minutes before going outside and apply again every two hours - more often if your child has been in water or is sweating.
- Encourage children to play in the shade as much as possible, especially during peak sun hours between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Make sure your child wears lightweight clothing, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses that offer 100 percent UV (ultraviolet) protection.
- Keep babies younger than 6 months of age out of direct sunlight.

Watch out for water dangers

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drowning is the second leading cause of death for children. As a parent, be water wise.

- Swim with your child in calm water without waves, and always know where the nearest life-guard is before getting in the water.

- Don't completely rely on flotation devices like life vests or floating baby seats to keep children safe; they can shift position, lose air or slip out from under a child.
- Never leave children unattended near water as kids can drown in just a few seconds, even if they know how to swim. Remember to supervise your child near bathtubs, toilets and buckets of water, too.

Survey the playground

Kids love playing on swings and slides, but parents should first look for potential safety hazards.

- Playground equipment often warms up in the sun and can burn a child's skin. Before your child plays, touch the metal bars and surfaces to make sure they aren't too hot.
- Check playground equipment for rusted parts and loose splinters. These hazards could pinch your child's skin.
- Be careful on slides. Make sure your child holds the slide's rails when climbing the ladder or sitting at the top. Also look for split or cracked plastic that could break if your child sits on it.

Banish the bugs

Insects can be really annoying, their bite can be painful and even dangerous sometimes. Parents can help protect their child by using insect repellants.

- Only use products that are approved for children; follow the instructions carefully and wash off the repellent once your child is back inside.
- Avoid using scented soaps or lotions on your child because perfumes can attract insects.
- Dress your child in light-colored clothing - it doesn't tend to attract bugs.

Don't forget the baby!

The inside of a car can become very hot, even on days that seem cool or overcast. NEVER leave a child in a car, even if he or she is sleeping or you are just running "in for a second." These tips can help you establish good habits, so you never accidentally leave a child in a car.

Get in the habit of always opening the back door of your vehicle every time you reach your destination to make sure a child has not been left behind.

Bike safety

It's never too early to get children used to wearing a helmet! Head injuries are the leading cause of death and disability in bicycle (including tricycles and "big wheel" type bikes), in-line skating, scooters, and skateboarding crashes.

Using a properly fitted helmet at any age helps prevent deaths and injury.

California's helmet law requires that everyone under 18 years of age wear a helmet while riding a bicycle, scooter or skateboard, wearing in-line or roller skates, or while riding as a passenger upon a bicycle, scooter or skateboard.

Both children and adults need to make safety an important part of bicycle, in-line skating, and skateboarding fun and activities.

Buy the Right Helmet

- Pick the right size. Helmets come in a range of sizes, including infant sizes;
- Buy a helmet that is approved by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), or Snell. Approved helmets meet strict safety standards;
- Take your child with you when you are shopping for a helmet. Your child should like his/her helmet, which will increase the likelihood that he/she will wear it consistently;
- Pick the right helmet for the sport. Some helmets are multi-sport, indicating that they can be used for in-line skating, skateboarding, bicycling, or other wheel sports. Some are designated as "bicycle hel-

met" and are designed only for that sport.

Wear Helmets Properly

- A helmet should fit your child's head so that when the straps are snug, it will not move around on the head;
- The front edge of the helmet should be two finger widths above the eyebrow;
- The helmet should fit flat atop your child's head and not be tilted back at an angle;
- Front and back straps of the helmet should form a V just below the ear;
- Front straps should be vertical and the rear straps should be flat;
- The chinstrap should be snug when your child opens his/her mouth (one finger should fit between the chin and the chin strap when the mouth is closed);
- Replace the helmet after it has been involved in an accident.



Buy the Right Bicycle

- Make sure your child rides a bicycle that is the right size;
- The bicycle should not be too big or complicated;
- The bicycle should have a bell or horn, a headlight, flashing taillight and reflectors.

Additional Tips

- Obey traffic laws and learn the rules of the road;
- Never allow small children to ride unattended or without a helmet, even if an area seems "safe", like a park or backyard.

About First 5 Sonoma County

First 5 Sonoma County funds children's health insurance and programs that improve childcare quality, help children succeed in school, and help parents provide safe and nurturing environments for their children. For more information on *First 5 Sonoma County* and its programs, please call 565-6626 or visit www.first5sonomacounty.org