

NEWSLETTER

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WATER AND SUNLIGHT

No human could survive without sun or water. But both water and sun can kill us. Parents must protect their children from the immediate hazards of water and the long-term dangers of excess exposure to the sun.

WATER SAFETY

- o Whenever children are playing in a public or home pool, there should always be a "designated watcher" who is doing nothing but watching the children--not grilling chicken or talking to friends.

- o Never leave a child alone near any body of water (pool, lake, ocean, wading pool, bathtub, bucket) even for a minute. A child can drown in the time it takes to answer the telephone.

- o Never rely on floaties or other inflatable toys to protect a child from drowning. They are not safe!

- o Keep toys like tricycles out of the pool area and do not permit running near the pool.

- o Pool areas should be equipped with rescue equipment like a pole and life ring and with a telephone (many drownings occur when an adult leaves the child "just to answer the phone")

- o Home pools must be properly fenced (five feet high, vertical spacing no more than four inches, horizontal supports at least 48 inches apart) and equipped with self-closing, self-latching gates. Be sure there are no chairs, tables, or toys nearby that a child might use to climb over the pool fence. Equip all doors from the house with self-closing, self-latching mechanisms.

- o If you have a pool, learn CPR.

- o All children should learn how to swim whether or not you have a pool. Check the Y or your local papers for swimming classes.

SUN SAFETY

- o Protect your child's skin from the sun. The deadliest form of skin cancer can result from a single sunburn in childhood. Put sun screen on your children the way you would put mittens on them in the winter in Minnesota -- automatically.

- o By the time the child is around eight, give the child responsibility for putting on sun screen before going out in the sun just as you give the child responsibility for toothbrushing. Obviously, in the beginning you check to be sure it is being done.

- o If your children burn easily, dress them in sun protective swimwear or a tee shirt when they are swimming to protect the shoulders. Use hats to protect the ears and face.

- o Protect your children's eyes from the sun with a hat or windshield visor. Shade the eyes of babies who are too young to shield their own. Older children should use properly fitted and rated sunglasses.

- o Protect young children from the heat as well as the sun. There are times it is simply too hot to play out of doors.

So follow a few safety rules and enjoy a happy and healthy summer!