

## Getting Ready for the Summer: Sun and Water Safety

From: Keep Kids Healthy [www.keepkidshealthy.com](http://www.keepkidshealthy.com)

It is well known that exposure to sun puts people at risk for skin cancer and premature aging and that most of that exposure comes during childhood (80% of a person's lifetime sun exposure occurs before they are 21.) Regular use of sunscreen in children can lower their risk of skin cancer by almost 78%.

Many sunscreens are available for safe use on children over six months old. Pick one offering UVA and UVB protection and with an SPF of 15 or higher, especially if your child has light skin. Apply the sunscreen in a thick coat at least 30-45 minutes before going outside and reapply frequently or more often if the child is swimming or perspiring heavily.

Other tips to protect your child from the damaging effects of the sun:

- Wear protective clothing, including a hat and long sleeve shirt and long pants. Keep in mind most clothing only has SPF of 5-9, so you can still get sun damage with a shirt on.
- Limit exposure to the sun when it is at its strongest (10am-4pm).
- Protect your child's eyes with sunglasses that protect against UVA and UVB radiation.
- Use sunscreen daily, even if it is cloudy, because most of the sun's radiation penetrates clouds and can still cause sunburn.
- Consider using a sunscreen with ingredients (such as zinc oxide or titanium dioxide) that physically blocks the sun's radiation if your child has sensitive skin.

Deet lowers the effectiveness of sunscreens, so use a higher SPF if you are using a combination product that has both a sunscreen and an insect repellent.

To ensure your children are safe, NEVER leave them unsupervised around water. Here are some tips to keep your child safe around the water this summer:

- Teach your child to SWIM, but remember that younger children shouldn't be left unsupervised even if they know how to swim.
- Always wear a safety **approved life jacket** when on a lake, river or ocean while boating, water skiing, jet skiing or tubing.
- Warn your children about playing in canals or other **fast moving water**.
- Do not let your child play around any water (lake, pool, ocean, etc.) without adult supervision even if he is a good swimmer.
- Don't allow running or rough play around the water.
- Empty out the water from a wading pool each day when playing is over, as statistics bear out the fact of toddler drowning deaths in as little as one-fourth inch of water.
- Take a class in CPR so you can be prepared in an emergency.