



# How To Keep Your

## Kids Safe This Summer

As temperatures increase, so does the need for safety precautions

A family playing on the beach during summer. Summer is a great time for kids to get outside and enjoy the weather — but it's important for parents and guardians to remember safety tips throughout the season.

“We want children to run, play and enjoy themselves, but we also have to be mindful that certain environmental elements may be potentially dangerous to them,” says pediatrician Paula Sabella, MD.

Ready for fun in the sun? Be safe about it! KidSafe shares 10 ways to keep your kids safe this summer, including how to avoid dehydration, tips to protect skin from the sun, and care for bites and bruises.

### 1. Protect kids' skin

Sunburn is the scourge of summer, and kids are

especially susceptible. It's important that you lather your child with sunscreen any time they're headed outdoors. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children wear sunscreen with at least 15 to 50 SPF.

Remember to reapply sunscreen every two hours or after swimming, sweating or toweling off, and consider wearing sun protection clothing for an added barrier.

Sunscreen isn't recommended for babies under six months, who should always be kept out of direct sunlight. Keep your littlest ones protected from the sun by dressing them in lightweight clothing and sun hats, and using umbrellas for shade.

“Harmful ultraviolet rays are at their strongest from between 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Minimizing outdoor play during these hours also minimizes the risk of sunburn to children,” “but even when they're in the shade, continue to use sunscreen!”



## 2. Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate

When it comes to warm weather, hydration is key — and not just when kids are playing sports or sitting in the sun. “Keep kids hydrated at all times, especially the day before a big activity or even the day before a play date,” Dr. Sabella advises.

Steer clear of soda, energy drinks and fruit juices, which may worsen dehydration. Water is the best source of hydration for kids who are over 1 year old, while breast milk and formula are the preferred fluids to hydrate kids under a year. To gauge whether your child is hydrated enough, take a peek at the color of their urine. It should be a light yellow color, not golden or dark.

## 3. Maintain healthy eating habits

Sodas and ice cream trucks and cookouts, oh, my! Opportunities for junk food abound during the summer, but abiding by healthy eating habits for kids while they’re out of school will ensure that your little ones learn healthy, consistent habits and get the vitamins and nutrients they need to fuel their summer fun.



## 4. Beware of hot cars

You probably think you could never, ever forget your child in the car on a hot day — but researchers estimate that half of all hot-car deaths involve a loving caregiver who forgets a sleeping child in the backseat of their car.

“We’re all human,” Dr. Sabella says, “and there are some things caregivers can do to help ensure that they don’t forget their child in the car.”

She recommends developing daily habits that can prevent hot-car deaths

Never intentionally leave your child in the car for any reason.



Be extra vigilant when you have a new or a different routine.

Leave another important item, like a purse, cell phone or work badge, in the backseat of the car. This serves as a reminder to get your child out of the car when you retrieve this item.

Make a plan with your babysitter or daycare providers to have them call you if your child is late for any reason.

There's no safe situation, temperature or length of time

for a child to be left alone in a car.

### 5. Ride safely

As kids head outdoors to play with friends and ride bicycles around the neighborhood, make sure they're practicing bike safety, including riding a properly fitted bike and wearing a properly fitted bike helmet.

"Adults can be good role models for children by always wearing their own bike helmets and abiding by the same bike safety rules we're asking kids to follow," Dr. Sabella notes.

### 6. Practice water safety

The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death in U.S. children ages 1 to 4 — so take to heart pool safety tips for families, from drain covers and fenced enclosures to life vests, swimming lessons and CPR classes.

Toddlers should be no further than an arm's length away from their guardian when they're around a pool or any other body of water. Empty buckets, bathtubs, coolers and wading pools immediately after use.

"I also recommend that nonswimming children always wear life vests when in water," Dr. Sabella says. "And any time you're on a boat or watercraft, everybody should be wearing life vests — adults and kids alike, both swimmers and nonswimmers."

### 7. Ward off bugs and tend to bites

Your kids aren't the only ones playing outside! When the weather warms up, the creepy-crawlies come out en masse, and little ones are liable to fall victim to bites and bumps.

Use insect repellent. Don't forget the bug spray! The Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than 30% concentration of DEET in insect repellents for children over two months old. Beware standing water. "Try to avoid stagnant water in or outside of your home," Dr. Sabella says. "Ponds and turned-off fountains with stagnant water can serve as a breeding ground for mosquitoes."

Check for ticks. May to October is tick season, so up your tick removal know-how and be on the lookout for these buggers burrowing in your kids' skin.

Know what to do. If your child has a run-in with a bee, spider, mosquito or other painful pest, follow doctors' guidance for treating bug bites and bee stings.

### 8. Safely enjoy fireworks

Children under 15 years old account for about a third of fireworks-related emergency department visits — most of which involve burn injuries to fingers, hands and eyes.

“Taking safety precautions will allow your family to enjoy summer fireworks worry-free,” KidSafe recommends

Don't give sparklers or bottle rockets to children, and practice other fireworks safety recommendations for both children and adults.



### 9. Prevent playground mishaps

As they spend more time outdoors during the summer, kids may be more prone than ever to scrapes and bruises. Practice safe playground habits to prevent injuries.

- Find the right playground. “Choose one that’s appropriate for your kids, with equipment that suits their age, size and abilities,” Dr. Sabella says.
- Do a touch test. Kids can get thermal burns from playground equipment, so confirm that slides and swings aren’t too hot before kids play.
- Wear the right attire. Opt for sturdy-soled sneakers over slippery flip-flops, and avoid clothing with strings, such as hoodies, which can get caught in equipment.
- Look for safe surfaces. Some playgrounds offer rubber or mulch on which kids can safely run, play and even fall. These surfaces are more kid-friendly — and less accident-prone — than cement and asphalt.
- To be on the safe side, keep a first aid kit handy and brush up on how to treat common playground injuries, from splinters and friction burns to bumps and bruises.

## 10. Don't overdo it on the outdoors

Kids of all ages should take breaks from playing outside by retreating into the shade — or, even better, into air-conditioning — every 20 minutes to 30 minutes. “Kids need time to relax, cool off and hydrate before they return to play,” Dr. Sabella says. “And once they’re done playing for the day, continue to keep up that hydration.”

Hot, humid weather also puts active kids at a higher risk for developing heat rash, so take precautions to avoid it and make sure you know how to treat it in case it happens.

## Enjoy your summer!

By following common-sense safety precautions, you can set your child up for a safe and enjoyable summer — without necessarily hovering over their shoulder all season long.

“Be mindful of the sun, keep an eye on hydration, and keep pool safety and water safety in mind,” KidSafe encourages. “And most of all, have fun, love your children and enjoy the summer safely with your children.”

