



Special points of interest:

Child Passenger Safety Seat Checks — June 6, 9, 27, 31

Child Passenger Safety Seminars — June 8 & 28

Drowning Prevention Seminars—July 6 & 28

Call 952-4536 for locations & times, or go to: <http://brevard.ifas.ufl.edu>

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Injuries often increase in summer. Take steps to keep your child safe.



For Safety's Sake

SUMMER SAFETY

It's summer and children are enjoying their time out of school. Even though they are taking a break from school, we want to make sure that they don't take a break from safety. Injuries in children often increase in summer as children have more free time and may be unsupervised more often. To help keep your children safe this summer, the following tips are provided.

Safety in the Heat

Children are often outdoors in the summer. When temperatures are high, chances for heat-related illnesses increase. To keep your child safe while in the heat, observe the following:

- Have children drink fluids before, during and after activity to replace fluids lost through sweat.
- Stay in cool or air-conditioned spaces when possible on hot days.
- Have children get their outdoor time in early in the morning or later in the afternoon when it is cooler.
- Encourage children to drink more fluids than usual to prevent dehydration and keep the body's core temperature down. Children should ideally drink every 20 minutes while playing outside, even if they are not thirsty. Children younger than 5 years old should drink half a glass of fluid, while older children should drink a full glass.
- Limit or avoid giving children drinks with caffeine or sugar, which can cause dehydration. Instead, offer them water or sports drinks sweetened with natural juices.
- Have children take cool baths, use spray bottles to mist the body, or allow some sprinkler play.
- Have children wear loose, lightweight clothing when outside.
- When children are outdoors, make sure they rest regularly, either indoors or in cool, shady areas outside.

Safety at the Playground

If your children will be out at parks, do your part to make sure they are safe for playing.

- Check playgrounds where your children play. Look for age-appropriate equipment and hazards such as rusted or broken equipment and dangerous surfaces. Report any hazards to the school or municipality.
- Remove hood and neck drawstrings from all children's outerwear to avoid strangulation hazards on playgrounds.
- If children ride bikes or other wheeled equipment to playgrounds, make sure they remove their helmets before using any playground equipment.
- Teach children proper playground behavior: no pushing, shoving or crowding.
- Tell children what equipment is appropriate for their age levels.

Pedestrian Safety

Young children (under 10 years of age) are more vulnerable to pedestrian-related injuries because they lack the cognitive, developmental, behavioral, physical, and sensory abilities of adults, and because adults often overestimate their pedestrian skills. Children under the age of 10 should not be allowed to cross the street alone, without supervision. Older children are often distracted, especially when with groups, thereby increasing their chances of being injured. If your children will be walking to different locations this summer, teach them the following rules to help keep them safe.

- Cross the street at the corner or at an identified crosswalk, if there is one, and obey all traffic signals. Look left, right, then left again before crossing and continue to look both ways until safely across.

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- Walk on a sidewalk when possible. When no sidewalk is present, walk on the left side of the street, facing oncoming traffic.
- If walking at night, wear bright-colored or reflective clothing. If possible, carry a flashlight.
- When playing outside, play in the back yard or playground. Avoid playing near streets and parking lots.

SAFETY IN AND AROUND VEHICLES

Many families are enjoying trips this year to destinations near or far. Whether you are traveling hundred of miles or staying closer to home, it's important that you take time to make sure that everyone in the vehicle is safe. This means making sure that all passengers are properly belted and secured and that you are taking precautions to avoid other vehicle-related injuries and death.

Before taking a trip, make sure that all passengers are properly secured. For young children, this means using the correct child safety restraint. There are four stages children will go through. The first stage is for children who are less than a year old and less than 20 pounds. These children should ride rear-facing in an infant carrier or convertible at about a 45 degree angle. If you have a seat that goes up to a higher weight in the rear-facing position, the recommendation is to keep the child that way until they reach that upper weight limit. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics now recommends that children ride rear facing until the age of two. Harnesses securing the child in the seat should be at or just below the child's shoulders.

The next stage is for children who weigh 20 pounds or more and are over a year old, up to at least 40 pounds. These children should sit forward facing in either a convertible seat or a combination or forward-facing only seat. Many of today's seats go to higher harness weights in the forward-facing position, allowing you to keep your child in a five-point harness for a longer time. Harnesses securing the child should be at or above the child's shoulder.

The third stage is for children who are at least 40 pounds up to between 80 and 100 pounds, 8 to 10 years old and about 4 foot 9 inches tall. These children are best protected using a booster seat. Boosters provide better protection for small children than seat belts alone, as they keep the lap belt low on the child's hips and assist the shoulder belt in staying properly positioned over the collar bone.

If a child can sit in a vehicle seat with their backs against the seat and their knees bent at the edge of the seat and the lap belt stays low on the hips and the shoulder belt falls across the collar bone, then they are ready for the fourth stage, the lap/shoulder belt. If not, they should remain in a booster.

Sources:

"Heat Exhaustion." Univ. of Maryland Medical Center. www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/heat-exhaustion-000075.htm

"Fact Sheet: Heat Exhaustion in Children." Texas Children's Hospital. www.texaschildrens.org/Parents/TipsArticles/ArticleDisplay.aspx?aid=13-7.

"Child Pedestrian Safety Rules in USA." SafeKids USA. www.usa.safekids.org/wtw/cpsr.html

"School/Playground: Protecting Your Family" Safe Kids USA. www.safekids.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=340&folders_id=177

In addition to children riding safely, it is important that parents model correct behavior by wearing their seat belts. An unbuckled passenger can cause injury to those who are belted, as they become projectiles in a crash. So parents, BUCKLE UP!



All passengers should be properly belted and secured while in a vehicle.

It is also important that children ride in the back seat of the vehicle.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under the age of 13 ride in a rear seating position.

Research shows that for children under the age of 13, there is a significant reduction in injury risk in a crash when children are in a rear seating position compared to the front seat, even when air bags are present. Studies show that front seating for children under the age of 13 elevates the risk of injury by 40% overall compared to rear seating. And, the middle of the back is the safest area of the car. In fact, new studies now show that for children birth to age three, center rear seating lowers the risk of injury by 43% compared to riding in a side position. (CHOP—PCPS).

Finally, we need to remember issues with children in and around vehicles. Never leave a child alone in a vehicle, even for a minute. Even just a few minutes on a warm day can cause an increase in a young child's body temperature, which can lead to permanent injury or even death. Children left alone can also become victims of car theft or can put cars into gear, causing injury and damage to themselves and others. Remember, too, to teach your children to never play in, on, or around vehicles, and keep your vehicle doors and trunk closed and locked.

Finally, when you have young children, always do a visual walk around your car to make sure that no children are behind the vehicle, and make sure that they are accompanied by an adult anytime they are getting in or out of a vehicle.

By following these rules, you can have a great trip this summer and can stay safe all year round while in your vehicle.

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