

Security Spotlight



An informational Guide for Securitas Canada Clients and Employees

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Summer Safety for Your Kids



Summer is coming and with it the summer vacation from school for your kids. In today's Canada, more and more children are unsupervised during much of the summer break because their parents, or parent, are occupied with their jobs during the weekdays. For some families, summer camps or summer day care are options that give parents peace of mind and children a fun and rewarding experience. But these options are not always accessible to all families.

Safe Kids Worldwide™ has estimated that every year 1 in 4 kids under age 14 will be injured seriously enough to require medical attention. Safe Kids also reports that 42 percent of all injuries happen between May and August. The good news is that you can help safeguard your children against many of the causes of injury through education and a few simple preventative measures.

Some Preventable Injuries

Bites and stings are not normally serious injuries, unless the person is allergic or there are many of them. Otherwise, they are a minor injury and one that may be prevented through the use of insect repellents containing DEET. It is important to note that these repellents can be toxic and should never be used on infants. The repellent should never be applied to anyone's face or hands. Using it on clothes is safest.

Ticks are another insect hazard that must be guarded against as they can be transmitters of disease. Wearing light coloured clothing can help your children spot ticks before they attach to the skin. The use of DEET containing insect repellents can also help defend against ticks, but it should never be applied to the face or hands. Conducting a tick check should become a nightly routine.

The Center for Disease Control recommends you check under the arms, between the legs, around the waist, inside the navel, and don't forget the hairline and scalp. Use fine tipped tweezers to hold the tick, as close to the skin as you can, and pull upwards. Do not twist or turn as this could cause the tick's mouth to break off under the skin. Use disinfectant on the area after removing the tick.

Playground equipment should be carefully inspected before allowing children to use it. Check that the equipment is not too hot from the sun. Make sure any ropes are secured and not frayed. The ground should be covered in a protective surface such as rubber mats, wood or rubber mulch or wood chips, never grass, asphalt, or concrete. Also, make sure your child's clothing is playground friendly. Close toed shoes and no loose clothing or clothing with strings (like hoodies) that could get caught on playground equipment.

Bike safety is of great importance as bike accidents are one of the major causes of childhood injury. Make sure your child always wears a helmet and that the helmet fits properly. Make sure the bike is a good fit as well. Have your child straddle the top bar of the bike with both feet flat on the ground. A 1 to 3-inch gap between the bar and your child's body means it's still the correct size. Teach your child to ride in the same direction as the traffic flow and obey all traffic signs.

Heat and dehydration are also major health threats that are often disregarded by children. Teach your children to recognize the signs of heat stroke (dizziness, trouble breathing, headaches, rapid heartbeat, nausea, vomiting, confusion, and hot, dry skin) and signs of dehydration (dizziness, dry mouth, cessation of sweating, irritability, lethargy, and fatigue).

Remind your children to take breaks in their play on hot days and to drink plenty of fluids, especially water or drinks that contain electrolytes.

Sunburn can be very painful and can sneak up on young children without their being aware of it. Apply a water-resistant sunscreen that protects against both UVA and UVB rays. Choose a sunscreen that is at least SPF 30 and apply it 15 to 30 minutes before going outside. If applying both sunscreen and insect repellent, apply the sunscreen first.

Education is your child's best defence against injury. Teach them safety rules about dealing with strangers, the dangers of fire, and general common sense behaviour to keep them safe and healthy. Consider signing them up for first aid training classes.

Summertime is a golden time for children. Let's all do our best to see that their golden summers are never tarnished by preventable injury. Remember, the tips in this article are just general guidelines. Consult the resources below for more detailed information.

Additional Resources

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) website (www.cdc.gov) and the Safe Kids Worldwide™ website (www.safekids.org) both provide excellent advice for keeping your children safe and healthy. The Canadian Red Cross (www.redcross.ca) offers first aid and CPR classes. Check out these resources today to keep your children safe tomorrow.