



An ounce of prevention...

Texas J-RAC Prevention and Education Committee Newsletter

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The Texas "J" Regional Advisory Council shall encourage and support the development of a comprehensive continuum of quality health care to be provided for all patients in Trauma Service Area "J". The Prevention & Education Committee shall encourage and support J-RAC participants endeavors to fully develop and implement the region wide trauma system in order to reduce the number of trauma incidents, preventable deaths, and reduce the severity of trauma-related disability, and to ensure that all trauma victims receive the best care possible.

Summer Dangers: Don't Let Your Child Get Hurt!

A commentary published in the journal "Pediatrics" listed the following as among the leading causes of injury and death in children during the summer.

Burns

BIGGEST DANGER: Indoor cooking. Fire-related injuries are responsible for 9.1 percent of unintentional deaths among kids worldwide, according to the Pediatrics article. Maintain your smoke alarms to give children time to escape. Use stove-guards to keep a child's curiosity (and hands) from getting in the wrong place, and prevent scalding injuries. Camp fires and barbecues are delightful, but parents should keep a close eye on potential hazards outdoors. Give your kids a chance to play out a fire emergency and get to a meeting point under your watchful eye. It could save their life.

Road Traffic Injuries

BIGGEST DANGER: Car accidents. In 2009, more than 1,300 children ages 14 and younger died as occupants in motor vehicle crashes in the United States, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). An additional 179,000 children were injured. "Road traffic injuries with cars are among the leading causes of death and permanent disability beyond the age of 5 years," Dr. Höllwarth wrote. Use of age-appropriate child safety seats on those summer road trips (or even to the grocery store for more watermelon). In a study by NHTSA, seats meant a 71 percent reduction in infant injuries; a 54 percent reduction for toddlers. The safest spot? The middle of the back seat. That back seat is the best place for all children younger than 13 years old. Front seat airbags can hurt kids. Seat belts are a must. They lead to a 45 percent reduction in crash deaths.

Poisonings

BIGGEST DANGER: Unexpected poisons like citronella oil in Tiki torches, cosmetics and, of course, household cleaners and medications. Globally, poisonings result in 3.9 percent of all deaths, and here at home more than 300 children are treated every day as a result of being poisoned. Two of these children die. Keep cleaning supplies out of sight and, outdoors, be aware of dangerous chemicals left within the reach of curious children. Keep the toll-free number for the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222) near the phone.

Falls

BIGGEST DANGER: For little kids, it's changing-tables; for bigger kids, it's summer sports and bikes. Globally, more than 4 percent of pediatric deaths are associated with falls. Almost 2.8 million children a year are injured by them. Bike injuries to children and adolescents? They add up to 26,000 traumatic brain injuries a year. This one might be the easiest for parents of infants. The routine use of guardrails and stair gates, changing diapers on the floor and using highchairs with safety belts will make a big difference. In older children, make it a family rule to use of basic protective sports gear. That means you wear a bike helmet, too.

Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/ParentingResourceCenter/summer-injury-risks-kids/story?id=19406530#>

Inside this issue:

- Summer Dangers: Don't Let Your Child Get Hurt! **1**
- Keeping Kids Safe in the Pool **2**
- Recognize Heat Stress **3**
- Prevent Heat Stress **4**



Assign lifeguard duties: One of the most common situations that leads to tragedy is the “But I thought you were watching her” scenario. Be clear about who’s watching your child when, even setting up official shifts if necessary. If you and your husband or partner are together at the pool, it’s still important that one person is tasked with keeping “eyes on the prize” at all times. Save important conversations with each other for later.

Avoid distractions: Put away the cell phone, and don’t tempt yourself with a magazine if you’re the one in charge. According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 88 percent of young drowning victims were under some form of supervision at the time they drowned — and in a startling 46 percent of cases, the child who drowned was under the supervision of both parents. So stay close by — in the pool if necessary, depending on the age of your child — and don’t let yourself look away, even for a minute.

Be joined at the hip with your child: If you need to leave the pool area, take your child with you. The leading cause of dangerous distraction during swim time is mom or dad leaving the pool area to answer the phone, use the bathroom, or fetch something, experts say. So if you suddenly realize you forgot the sunscreen or need an extra towel, insist that your child get out of the water and come with you while you take care of your errand.

Teach your child water safety as early as possible: If children have taken a swimming class that teaches basic survival skills like treading water and getting to the side of the pool, statistics show they’re much less likely to drown, even if they do get into a dangerous situation.

Take toys out of the pool when not in use: Colorful Styrofoam “noodles” and blow up toys look awfully tempting floating out there in the water, and all it takes for an accident to happen is for a child to lean an inch too far out over the water. So remove all toys from the pool when kids get out of the water and store them away from the pool’s edge.

Check pool areas for safe fencing and gates: When you’re staying in a hotel or other lodging, it’s easy to put too much faith in the safety of the pool protection apparatus provided. Gates can be left open, locks can fail to latch, fences can be climbed if they’re not high enough. Do a safety check of the area, and if it doesn’t look childproof, then don’t let your children go near the pool area without an adult.

Use flotation devices sparingly and only when you’re with your child: According to safety experts, “floaties” such as armbands, vests, and rings give both parents and child a false sense of security, yet they aren’t foolproof. Blow-up devices can pop, and Styrofoam or plastic devices can slip around or shift so they don’t support your child properly. It’s okay to use floaties if they’re in addition to the safety of your arms, but never let a non-swimming child “swim” completely dependent on a flotation device.

Enforce safety rules: Those big blue signs posted by pools are there for a reason. Wet cement and tile can be very slippery, and even kids who are strong swimmers are in danger if they fall and hit their heads. Diving can also pose a danger; make sure kids know to dive only into deep water and enforce any posted “no diving” rules. From the very first time you take your kids to a swimming pool, be strict about safety rules and let them know the consequence of disobeying them: no swimming.

Safeguard home pools: If your house has a pool or your children use a neighbor’s pool, make sure it’s equipped with modern safeguards. Every pool should be surrounded by permanent, four-sided fencing that encloses the entire pool area. The fence should be at least four feet high and preferably six feet high, and gates should be self-closing and self-latching. Test gates and latches on any pool your kids use to make sure they’re well maintained and work properly.



Recognize Heat Stress

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: the body's temperature rises rapidly, the body loses its ability to sweat, and it is unable to cool down. Body temperatures rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Stroke

Warning signs vary but may include the following:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103°F)
- Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

Warning signs vary but may include the following:

- Headache
- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle Cramps
- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting
- Skin: may be cool and moist
- Pulse rate: fast and weak
- Breathing: fast and shallow



Prevent Heat Stress

What You Can Do to Protect Yourself

- Drink cool, nonalcoholic beverages. If your doctor generally limits the amount of fluid you drink or has you on water pills, ask him how much you should drink when the weather is hot. Also, avoid extremely cold liquids because they can cause cramps.
- Rest.
- Take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath.
- If possible, seek an air-conditioned environment. (If you don't have air conditioning, consider visiting an air-conditioned shopping mall or public library to cool off.)
- Wear lightweight clothing.
- If possible, remain indoors in the heat of the day.
- Do not engage in strenuous activities.

What You Can Do to Help Protect Elderly Relatives and Neighbors

- Visit older adults at risk at least twice a day and watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- Encourage them to increase their fluid intake by drinking cool, nonalcoholic beverages regardless of their activity level.
- Take them to air-conditioned locations if they have transportation problems.

What You Can Do for Someone With Heat Stress

- Get the person to a shady area.
- Cool the person rapidly, using whatever methods you can. For example, immerse the person in a tub of cool water; place the person in a cool shower; spray the person with cool water from a garden hose; sponge the person with cool water; or if the humidity is low, wrap the person in a cool, wet sheet and fan him or her vigorously.
- Monitor body temperature and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops to 101°–102°F
- If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the hospital emergency room for further instructions.
- Do not give the person alcohol to drink.
- Get medical assistance as soon as possible.