



West Cambridge Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine

It's summer time!

We think of six things to keep the kids safe during summer:
sun, heat, water, ticks, insect repellent and travel.

Sun!

You might get variability among providers in our office regarding how diligent we need to be for sun protection versus letting our bodies get some vitamin D, but we all agree that long, repeated sun exposure causes cancer, and sunburns are not fun. So, with that in mind the best way to protect kids from the sun during summer is shade! Stay out of the sun when you are able, under the tree, under a canopy. When you can't avoid it, wear hats and long sleeve spf clothing because who really puts on sunblock enough times. For any parts of the body you can't cover, use that sunblock if your kids are 6 months and older. We often recommend mineral based for kiddos. Put it on thick and put it on frequently.

Heat!

High temperatures (greater than 90 degrees Fahrenheit) can be dangerous and pose a health risk to children. Kid's bodies heat up 3-5 times faster than adults. Make sure kids are taking frequent breaks during outside play time, limit time outside, encourage them to drink plenty of water during these breaks, and wear loose fitting clothing that allows air flow. Signs of heat illness to watch out for include feeling faint or very tired, confusion, loss of coordination, severe or unusual headache, fever, intense thirst, not urinating for many hours, muscle aches or spasms, nausea or vomiting. If your child is experiencing these symptoms, take them inside to an air-conditioned room if possible. If symptoms persist, call our office to discuss further. It is important to never leave kids in the car alone, especially during the summer. Cars can heat up by 20 degrees in just 10 minutes, regardless of whether windows are cracked or the car is parked in the shade.

Water!

Not to be a downer, but drowning happens fast. The most important part of water safety is vigilance and good communication. Know who is on duty when you are around any body of water. That includes the kiddie pool and the tub! Make sure those kiddie pools and tubs get drained of water. Make sure there are fences around pools and gates are closed. And yes, teach kids to swim. It is not a guarantee of safety but it can potentially provide a little more time for rescue.



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Ticks!

They are everywhere and spreading. Ticks carry multiple tick borne illness, the most common being Lyme disease. DEET and picaridin on skin and clothing can help prevent ticks from attaching, but the most important thing you can do are nightly tick checks. Check every nook and cranny on your kids' bodies (and yours too!). If you find one, use tweezers or a tick remover and get it off ([CDC – What to do after a tick bite](#)) as best you can. Don't go digging for parts if any are left behind. If you are confident that you are checking regularly and the tick you found has been on for less than 36 hours then you are all set. Nothing else to do but keep checking. If the tick is a deer tick (or you're unsure), it's been on longer than 36 hours or looks very well fed (i.e. engorged), then take the tick off and call us within 72 hours (though not in the middle of the night please... it can wait until the next day). We can provide a single dose of doxycycline to help prevent Lyme disease. There is no need to save the tick or to get the tick tested. There is just too much Lyme to make that worthwhile.

Insect Repellent!

Insect repellent can be used on the skin or clothing to help prevent bites from mosquitos, ticks, fleas, and flies. It is safe to use:

- DEET repellent in concentrations of 10-30% (CHECK THE CONCENTRATION!) on children who are 2 months or older.
- Picaridin insect repellent in concentrations of 5-10% on children 2 months or older.
- Permethrin can be sprayed on clothing or camping gear for children who do not put clothing in their mouths. It should not be sprayed directly on the skin. It will last about a week, despite washing the clothing a few times.

Travel!

It is important to consider any possible vaccines or malaria prophylaxis for travel well prior to the departure date. Vaccines typically need at least 2 weeks to ensure a full immune response. So, plan to call at least a month prior to leaving if you think you may need vaccines. We currently use the [CDC travel site](#) to help guide our medical decisions. The travel information we need to make decisions is your destination (even locations within the countries), when and for how long you are going, and what type of travel (ie family based, resorts, safari, service, etc). Send us a message or give a call to provide that information and we can schedule a travel visit with us or let you know if you need a travel clinic. A little note on domestic travel: Typically, the regular schedule of vaccines is enough for travel within the United States. In the current climate however, if you are travelling to an area with a true measles outbreak, it may be recommended to get either an extra MMR, or to get one early. Send a message or give a call and we can discuss this as needed.