

# HERE COMES SUMMER!

Make sure your children (and you) are ready.

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## SUN PROTECTION

Whether you remain in Arizona, or travel to other areas of our country, you should be careful when outdoors. The sun can cause serious acute and long-term problems. Many of you have had the experience of sunburn and surely remember what a painful experience that was. Sunscreen is very important and should have a protective factor (SPF) of 15 or above. It is important to remember that sunscreen needs to be re-applied often to achieve the protection you expect. I am often asked whether it is safe to apply sunscreen to infants. The answer is **YES**; however, it is important to not allow infants to receive a great deal of sun exposure. Their small bodies have a large surface area and, thus, are more likely to receive an increased amount of ultraviolet radiation. This places them at increased risk of having skin cancer as an adult. When your infant is exposed to the sun, it is important that they wear clothing that has sun protective qualities and they should wear a hat that provides shading to their faces. When you are near water, you need to be extra cautious as the sun's rays are reflected from the water. Avoid exposing infants to the sun during the peak hours of 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.



## DRINK PLENTY OF FLUID

It is important to have adequate amounts of fluid with you when you engage in outdoor activities. Even if you are sitting near a pool, you are still constantly perspiring - you may not even realize it. There is a medical term called *insensible water loss*, which has to do with the fact that you are evaporating fluids from your body at all times to keep your body temperature at its normal comfortable level. Water, fruit juice or unsweetened sports drinks are important to keep with you when you are outdoors.



## STAY SAFE AROUND WATER

Drowning is a tragic occurrence in Arizona year-round. Having a swimming pool in your backyard is a wonderful convenience; but it also requires an increased level of vigilance. If you have a pool, it should have a fence on all four sides that is at least four-feet high and has a self latching gate that is too high for a child to reach. Children should always be supervised when in the pool and **NEVER** left alone. The campaign that suggests that "**2 SECONDS IS TOO LONG**" definitely points out that you cannot take a moment away from watching children while in the pool. Always keep a portable phone with you and never leave you children unattended at the pool. CPR training is an important skill to have when supervising children. Enjoy water activities, but take all appropriate precautions for safety.



## BUCKLE UP FOR SAFETY

During the summer months, many families spend a great deal of time on the highway traveling to various points of interest. It is most important that parents and older children remain buckled up in their seatbelts, and that infant, toddlers, and young children are in age-appropriate care restraint devices that are federally approved. Studies have shown that your chances of surviving an automobile crash are increased, if seat belts are properly used. If you have any concerns about whether your infant's car seat is properly installed, stop at your local fire station for assistance. Take along some items (books, games) that will amuse the children during the long periods of the drive to keep them entertained. Do not allow them to leave their restraints until your vehicle has stopped.



## STINGS, BITES, AND INJURIES

No matter where you travel, there is always the hazard of getting bitten or stung by an insect. Bees in Arizona, and nearly the entire United States, are Africanized and may be very dangerous. Do everything in your power to avoid them. Other insects to be careful of are hornets, wasps, yellow jackets, and stinging fire ants. Certainly, you can't always avoid contact with these bugs. If you or your children do get stung, stingers can be removed by carefully scraping horizontally with your fingernail or a credit card. Do not squeeze the area as you may cause the reaction to worsen by allowing some of the toxin in the stinger to enter the blood stream! It is a good idea to have Benadryl® with you, in both tablet and liquid form, for these unpredictable events. In situations that may become life-threatening (e.g. breathing problems), get to the nearest emergency facility in the area.

Also, make certain that your child's immunizations are up-to-date. This is important because of all the interactions your child will have with other people, and their potential diseases, as you visit various sightseeing areas. Especially make certain that their tetanus vaccine is current to protect against the possibility of incurring a serious problem from an open wound.



## HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER

Summertime can be a wonderful experience for a family. However, I've just described some of the things you need to think about, and plan for, in order to avoid possible mishaps. With diligence and vigilance you and your family will enjoy your summer vacation safely - create many happy memories.