

"To promote the health and well-being of all Californians with developmental disabilities."

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Wellness Digest

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Volume 3, Number 2

Summer Safety

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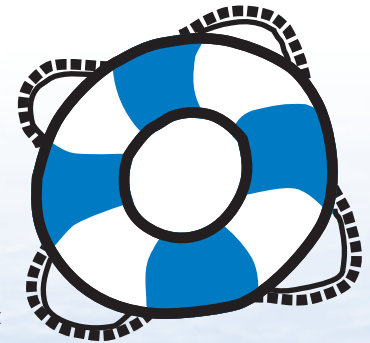
Drowning is defined as death by suffocation after submersion in a liquid. Drowning, by definition, is fatal. Near drowning is the term used when a person survives, for at least 24 hours following such an event.

Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death among children under the age of 15. For each child who dies from drowning, approximately four children are hospitalized for near drowning. One third of near drowning victims who are comatose on admission to the hospital, and survive, suffer significant neurological impairment.

The circumstances in which people drown typically vary depending on age, gender, geographical region, community, season, race, and economic status.

Studies have demonstrated that:

- Children less than one year of age most frequently die in bathtubs and buckets.
- Five gallon buckets pose a drowning hazard for young children, especially those between 7 and 15 months of age.
- Children from 1-4 years of age most often drown in home or apartment swimming pools.
- Children and adolescents from 5-19 years of age most frequently drown in lakes, ponds, rivers, and pools.
- Males account for 92% of drowning deaths in the 15-19 age bracket.
- Alcohol use is involved in about 25-50% of adolescent and adult deaths associated with water recreation. It is a major contributing factor in up to 50% of drowning among adolescent boys.
- For the nation as a whole, drowning rates for all age groups are three times higher in rural areas than in urban areas.
- Childhood drowning in rural areas often occurs in natural bodies of water and irrigation canals.
- Increased drowning risk arises from changing environmental conditions (e.g. depth, water temperature, currents, and weather), hazards concealed in murky water, and inaccessibility of emergency medical services.



From the Director

Summer - A Time for Water and Heat Safety

Cliff Allenby, Director



Summer is a time when young children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities are most prone to life threatening, heat-related illnesses. We can help ensure the safety of home-bound neighbors who have disabilities and elderly relatives by calling them at least twice a day; helping them to open windows in their homes where safe and asking them to drink water, even if they do not feel thirsty.

Conserving energy is easy. Simple steps such as turning off lights and equipment when not in use; running major appliances after 7 p.m.; using cold and warm water for laundry; turning off the dry cycle before running a full dishwasher; and cooling off with fans instead of air conditioning can keep energy use down and help prevent power outages. For information on how to conserve energy, please visit www.flexyourpower.ca.gov

For many of us, when we think of summer, carefree vacations and outdoor activities likely come to mind. But this time of year can also be hazardous, particularly when young children are around water. Open water poses a special risk for young children. More children under the age of 5 die from water related accidents than any other type of accident. The California Department of Developmental Services currently serves 516 persons with developmental disabilities caused by near drowning accidents.

Keep the fun in your summer. Never leave young children alone in or near water. That means swimming pools, ponds, pails, and bathtubs. Never ever leave children, elderly or disabled adults or pets in closed cars during hot weather. Even with the window lowered a bit, a car can generate enough heat in the sun to kill a child, an elderly adult or a person with a disability.

The Wellness Digest is a resource for information on important health topics. I hope you will take a few moments to read the health and safety suggestions in this edition. I believe they will help you and your family have a safer and cooler summer.

Cliff Allenby
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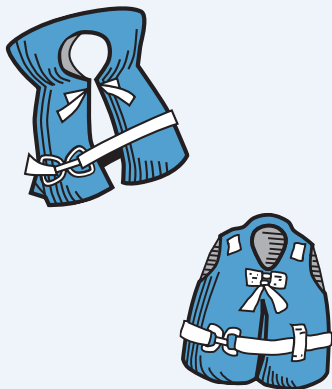
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Drowning Prevention Recommendations



The printed version of this edition of the Wellness Digest contained information on page 3 from the American Academy of Pediatrics regarding drowning prevention. It has been removed from this internet version due to copyright restrictions.

To view information on drowning prevention, please visit www.aap.org/policy/04482.html

Please note that you may still view pages 4-8 of this edition of the Wellness Digest.

DIVING SAFETY

Diving or jumping into a pool, lake, or river can be a dangerous activity if not done safely. According to the THINK FIRST Foundation, about 1,000 diving-related injuries occur every year. Of these injuries, 95% occur in water that is five feet deep or less. Nearly 90% of spinal injuries associated with swimming occur in private or residential pools. Unfortunately, less than 10% of those who experience a diving-related spinal cord injury ever recover neurological function. By practicing safe diving habits and following the “Diving Don’t” rules we can help make this and every summer safe and fun.

DIVING DON'T RULES



- Don't dive off the side of a diving board. Instead dive straight ahead.
- Don't do a back dive. Backyard pools are not built for this dangerous dive.
- Don't dive at or through objects, such as inner tubes.
- Don't run and dive, it gives your body the same amount of force towards the water as a dive from a diving board.
- Don't dive from rooftops, balconies, ledges, fences, or trees.
- Don't dive from ladders, slides or other pool equipment.
- Don't try fancy dives, or dives with a straight vertical entry. These dives take a long time to slow down and must be done only after careful training and in pools designed for competitive diving.
- Don't put diving equipment on a pool that was not designed for it.
- Don't swim or dive alone.
- Don't drink and dive.
- Don't dive into unfamiliar bodies of water, in which you are unaware of the depth and/or location of underwater obstacles.

RISKS OF SUN EXPOSURE

Heat Related Illnesses and What To Do

Overexposure to sun and heat can cause many illnesses. Illnesses from heat exposure range from mild, such as a sunburn, to sunstroke, which can be severe and life threatening. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, on average, 175 deaths occur each year in the United States as a result of heat related illness. However, this number can increase significantly if normally cooler areas are hit with an unprecedented heat wave.

There is a great risk to children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly who are left in cars on hot days. According to experts it can take as little as ten minutes for the temperature inside a car to rise to levels that can kill its occupants. Even when the windows are left slightly open, there is still danger of heat exposure and death. If you see a child or a person with a disability in a car unattended, try to find the parent or care provider as soon as possible or call police or a security officer for help. By taking action immediately, you could save a life.

Safety tips: What to do when high temperatures strike

Please assure that children, the elderly, and individuals with developmental disabilities are protected in the following ways.

Preventative measures:

- Wear lightweight and light colored clothing. The light colors will reflect the sun. It is also a good idea to wear a hat or use an umbrella to shield the sun.
- Drink water or juice even if you are not thirsty. Drink 8-10 glasses of water per day. Drink even more if you are working or exercising in hot weather. Avoid alcohol or caffeine, which dehydrate the body.
- Do not eat large meals. Instead eat smaller quantities and eat more often. Avoid protein rich foods, which increase metabolic heat.
- Take it easy! Do not engage in strenuous activity. If you must exert yourself, try to do it during the coolest part of the day: between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m.
- Stay inside if possible.
- Individuals with impaired movement should avoid temperatures above 95 degrees if at all possible.
- In the event of a power outage, consider going to a cool public building, or driving in an air-conditioned vehicle.

At what temperature do people become at risk for heat related illnesses?

- 80 to 90 degrees** Fatigue is possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.
- 90 to 105 degrees** Heat stroke, heat cramps and heat exhaustion are possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.
- 105 to 130 degrees** Heat stroke, heat cramps and heat exhaustion are likely, particularly with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.
- 130 degrees and higher** Heatstroke/sunstroke is highly likely with continued exposure.

Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. There will be a million more cases of skin cancer this year. Skin damage from the sun's ultraviolet rays is cumulative, which is why skin cancer is most prevalent among older people. Most of our sun exposure, between 60% and 80%, happens before our 18th birthday. This is because children spend more time outdoors than adults.

All skin cancers are harmful and some, especially malignant melanoma, a form of cancerous mole, can be deadly if left untreated. Malignant melanoma is the second most common form of cancer in women 25-34 years of age.

Most Common Heat Related Illnesses

Illness	Symptoms	Treatment *	When to Call A Health Professional
Sun Burn	Redness and pain in the skin. In severe cases there is also swelling, blisters, fever, and headaches.	Drink lots of water. Take acetaminophen or aspirin for the pain. Don't give aspirin to children. Aloe Vera gel and certain moisturizers will help reduce the pain and itch associated with sunburn.	If severe blistering occurs with fever or a very ill feeling. If a fever is 102 degrees or higher. If signs of heat stroke develop. If dizziness or vision problems persist after you have cooled off.
Heat Cramps	Heavy sweating and painful spasms usually in the leg or abdomen muscles.	Get the person to a cooler place and have them rest in a comfortable position. Give a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Do not let them drink too quickly. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths.	If symptoms persist for over 2 hours.
Heat Exhaustion	Weakness and heavy sweating. The skin is cold, pale and clammy. The pulse becomes weak and shallow. Fatigue, confusion, weakness, dizziness and nausea. Fainting and vomiting may occur.	Get the person to a cooler place and have them rest in a comfortable position. Give a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Do not let them drink too quickly. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths or sponge the body with cool water in a bath.	Call 911 or go to the emergency room if: the skin is dry, even under the armpits, and bright red or flushed, the body temperature reaches 102 degrees, or the person is delirious, disoriented, or unconscious.
Heat Stroke, which is also known as Sunstroke	High blood temperature (102 degrees or higher) along with hot dry skin and a rapid and strong pulse. Unconsciousness is possible. The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, has stopped working.	This is a life-threatening situation! Help is needed fast. Call 9-1-1 or your local Emergency Medical Service (EMS) number. Then move the person to a cooler place and quickly cool the body. This can be done by wrapping a wet sheet around the body and fanning it. If you have ice packs or cold packs wrap them in a cloth and place them on each of the victims wrists and ankles, in the armpits and on the neck to cool the large blood vessels. Do not use rubbing alcohol because it closes the skins's pores and prevents heat loss. Keep the person lying down and make sure they are breathing.	Call 9-1-1 immediately.

* Medical advice should be obtained directly from a licensed physician.



Skin Cancer – What to look for

Although many skin cancers are slow growing, it is critical that they are recognized as early as possible. Skin cancers tend to develop in an area of the body that has had prolonged exposure to the sun, such as the face, ears, hands, chest, neck (especially the back part), and arms.

Individuals should examine their skin regularly. If someone cannot perform the skin exam alone, it should be done for them. Look for unusual moles, spots, or bumps. Be extra careful when checking areas that get the most sun exposure. Your doctor should be informed if you have a family history of malignant melanoma.

You should contact your doctor if you notice any of the following changes or conditions in a skin growth.

- Asymmetric shape: one half of the growth does not match the other half.
- Border irregularity: the edges are ragged, notched, or blurred.
- Color: the color is not uniform. Watch for shades of red and black, or a red, white, and blue mottled appearance.
- Diameter: larger than a pencil eraser (harmless moles are usually smaller than this.)
- Scaliness, oozing, bleeding, or spreading of pigment into surrounding skin.
- Appearance of a bump or nodule on the mole, or any change in appearance of the mole.
- Itching, tenderness, or pain.
- Unusual skin changes or growths, especially if they bleed and keep growing.

Prevention

To protect skin from the sun, individuals should wear long sleeved clothing and a hat with a 3-4" brim whenever possible. Use a sunscreen with SPF 15 or more in ALL kinds of weather. People with fair hair or skin or who burn easily should use a sunscreen with SPF 30. Apply sunscreen 20 minutes prior to going outside and reapply throughout the day. Most sunscreen needs to be reapplied after skin comes in contact with water. Find shade, especially between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Medications and Sun Exposure

Many medications can cause increased sensitivity to the sun. This is often referred to as photosensitivity. Many widely used medications, including antihistamines, used in cold and allergy medicines; nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, used to control pain and inflammation; and antibiotics, including the

tetracyclines and the sulfonamides, or “sulfa” drugs, can cause photosensitivity in some people. Even some over the counter products, such as anti-dandruff shampoos, may increase your tendency to sunburn for up to 24 hours after application.

Antidepressants, anti-psychotics, cardiovascular drugs, and oral medications for diabetes can also trigger photosensitivity. Though these medications often come with warning labels, patients should contact their pharmacist with questions about the risk of photosensitivity associated with any specific medication.

Ideally, people should avoid prolonged exposure to sunlight if they are using the above medications. But when exposure cannot be avoided, it is important to take extra precautions.

OUTDOOR AND YARD SAFETY

When spending time outside this summer in the yard, playing at the playground, or riding a bicycle or skateboard, the risk of injury can be minimized by following some basic safety precautions.

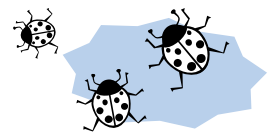
Yard Safety

Make sure there are no toxic plants growing in your yard. These include many common flowers, shrubs and weeds. If your garden contains such plants be sure to fence those areas. Check all yard structures for sharp edges, loose bolts or screws, splinters, cracks, or other damage that could catch or hurt people. All sharp edges that cannot be removed should be cushioned to reduce injury in case of a fall. Yard structures should only be painted with lead-free paint and peeling paint should be removed or repainted. Arsenic and other compounds are sometimes present in pressure treated wood; it is best to avoid using such wood if possible.

Most insects do not pose the potential to cause any harm or injury. The following tips may provide some treatment and prevention strategies.

Bug safety tips:

- Do not use scented soaps, perfumes or hair sprays.
- Avoid areas where insects nest or congregate, such as stagnant pools of water, uncovered foods and gardens where flowers are in bloom.
- Avoid dressing in clothing with bright colors or flowery prints.
- To remove a visible stinger from skin, gently scrape it off horizontally with a credit card or your fingernail.
- You can also remove a stinger by pinching it out with a pair of tweezers or your fingers.



Playground Safety

Each year, about 148,000 children are treated in hospital emergency rooms for public playground equipment-related injuries. Most of the injuries are the result of falls. About 15 children die each year as a result of playground equipment-related incidents. Most of the deaths are due to strangulations, though some are due to falls.

Playground safety tips:

- Make sure all equipment is well maintained.
- Swing should be made of soft material such as rubber, plastic, or canvas.
- Make sure metal slides are cool to prevent legs from getting burned.
- Since almost 60% of all injuries are caused by falls to the ground, it is best if the play equipment is not on asphalt or concrete.

Planning An Outing This Summer?

This checklist may help you plan a safer trip:

- ✓ Those with communication difficulties should carry identification and emergency phone numbers in case they become lost.
- ✓ Anyone taking medication should have some with them. Check with your pharmacist to see if the medication requires special handling.
- ✓ Make sure that those who are eating on the outing are consuming foods that are consistent with their individual dietary requirements.
- ✓ Carry a cell phone or know how to obtain help in the event of an emergency.
- ✓ Be sure that there is adequate supervision for children and adequate assistance for adults with developmental disabilities.
- ✓ Make sure you know if anyone under your care is allergic to particular medications, food, fluids, or other substances in the environment.

Resources

For a free brochure on drowning prevention, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Drowning Prevention Foundation, P.O.Box 202, Alamo, CA 94507. Telephone (925) 820-SAVE.

The American Red Cross offers classes in adult, child, and infant CPR. Contact your local American Red Cross chapter for class times and locations.

Bicycle and Skateboard Safety

Those who need supervision when biking or skating should not ride in the street or in driveways, where they can roll into the street or a car may unexpectedly turn. It is best to ride in a fenced enclosure or a playground free from sharp cornered objects that can cause injury if fallen on or run into.

Using a helmet when bicycling or skateboarding is extremely important. Everyone should wear a helmet. The cost of a helmet is about \$20.00 and it can be purchased in a bike shop or by mail order. Do not purchase a used helmet, if it has been in a crash the foam has already been compacted and will have lost its protective function.

Things to consider when buying a helmet:

- Head size can vary so be careful when fitting the helmet. It should sit level on the person's head and fit securely when the strap is fastened.
- Look for the roundest and smoothest helmet you can find so that it will skid across pavement easily during a crash.
- Put the helmet on and make sure that you cannot work it off when it is fastened and the straps are adjusted.
- Look for bright colors on the outside for visibility.

Biking Safety tips:

- Always obey all traffic laws.
- Use a headlight and reflectorized safety equipment when riding at night.
- Always wear a helmet.
- Wear bright colored clothing.
- Be sure your bike is in proper operating condition before each ride.
- Watch for turning vehicles and vehicles exiting driveways.
- Watch for opening doors on parked cars.
- Ride on bike trails and streets with bike lanes whenever possible.
- Never ride double or carry packages that obstruct your view or interfere with your control of the bike.
- Learn the rules of the road. Responsible bicyclists are involved in fewer accidents!



We Welcome Your Comments

Use our toll free number, 1-877-DDS-HEAL (1-877-337-4325), to request subscriptions, change your mailing information or to provide your comments about the Wellness Digest. Individuals using a TDD can contact us at (916) 654-2054. Letters may be addressed to Editor, DDS Wellness Digest, 1600 Ninth Street, MS 3-22, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Our Thanks to

Our consulting editor for this issue of the Wellness Digest is **James Popplewell, M.D.**, the Medical Director at Valley Mountain Regional Center in Stockton, California. He also has a private practice, in which he has been providing medical services to individuals with special needs for over 20 years.

Sources

The information presented in this issue of the Wellness Digest was compiled from the following sources:

American Academy of Pediatrics Web Site

www.aap.org

U.S. Food and Drug Administration Web Site

www.fda.gov

American Red Cross of the Delmarva Peninsula Web Site

www.redcrossdelaware.org

National Weather Service Web Site

www.nws.noaa.gov

Children's Safety Association of Canada Web Site

www.safekid.org

Arizona Child Care Resource and Referral Web Site

<http://arizonachildcare.org>

Announcements

Through the Wellness Initiative, DDS and regional centers are collaborating with universities, State departments, professional organizations, and service agencies to provide education, outreach, and consultation to healthcare providers, as well as improved access to quality health services for consumers. Here are some of the many resources that have been developed to assist in these efforts:

PACT Net, developed in partnership with the UC Davis M.I.N.D. Institute, provides free consultations to community physicians who are treating persons who have developmental disabilities and complex medical conditions.

Health Notes: Care of Children and Adults with Developmental Disabilities is a special publication completed in partnership with the California State Board of Pharmacy and highlights subjects of importance to California pharmacists.

The Road to Wellness: Accessing Medical Services and Navigating the Managed Care System was created in collaboration with the California Medical Association Workgroup on Health Care for Persons with Developmental Disabilities and serves as a guide for consumers and their families.

A major health web site, www.ddhealthinfo.org, is funded by DDS and is coordinated by the Center for Health Improvement and the University of California San Diego, School of Medicine.