



David E. Simai M.D.

Board Certified Pediatrician

660 Central Avenue
suite #3
Cedrhurst, New York 11516
Tel. (516) 374-2228
Fax. (516) 374-2044
Email: DavidSimai@yahoo.com

Summer Safety Tips

Dear readers, some of you may remember the first summer safety article I wrote two years ago, which discussed sunburns, heat stress and pool and beach safety.

This year, I would like to focus on some other important summer safety tips.

1. Bug Bites and Repellants – spending more time outside means more exposure to insect bites, and especially in the south shore of Long Island, itchy nights are commonplace in most homes.

I did some research to find out why some people are more prone to mosquito bites than others, and here are some of the conclusions of scientific studies:

- Mosquitoes prefer “human targets” with type O blood over other types
- Some people with type O blood that secrete sugar like chemicals known as saccharides through their skin. Mosquitoes love these secretors more than any other human being.
- Cholesterol – some people have the ability to store cholesterol on their skin surface and attract mosquitoes to their skin (this may not be related to their total cholesterol level in the blood).
- Other Acids – such as uric acid and lactic acid attract mosquitoes.
- Floral perfumes and deodorants – it is a common misconception that mosquitoes live on human blood. They would much prefer to feed on nectar from wild flowers.
- Dark clothing – solid patterns more than floral or striped patterns.
- Exhaled air from our lungs contains CO₂ – Carbon Dioxide – which mosquitoes could detect from 60 to 100 feet away and rush towards their targets

Prevention

- Most over the counter repellants contain the chemical DEET which is available in concentrations ranging between 5%-100%.
- I have searched the possible side effects of DEET and found that the chemical is hazardous has been reported to cause rare, but serious side effects such as ranging from local skin reactions to death (most deaths were caused by accidental ingestion of the chemical)
- In 1989 3M has developed a slow release formulation containing 35% DEET for the US army, which minimizes the possible side effects of DEET – the product is available under the name – Hour Guard



David E. Simai M.D.

Board Certified Pediatrician

660 Central Avenue
suite #3
Cedrhurst, New York 11516
Tel. (516) 374-2228
Fax. (516) 374-2044
Email: DavidSimai@yahoo.com

The CDC (Centers of Disease Control) Recommendations

- To keep your children safe, do not use repellents on kids under the *age of 2*.
- Use repellents *sparingly* on kids 2-6 years old.
- Use products containing no more than 10% DEET on *all kids*.
- Avoid using DEET if you are *pregnant* – it can cause severe birth defects.
- Adults should use repellents containing less than 35% DEET.
- Always follow the directions on the product label.

Natural Repellants

- Thousands of plants have been tested for the insect repellent properties. While none of them are as potent as DEET, some studies point that soybean oil repellent may be as effective as 5% DEET products.
- Other effective natural repellents include: Lemon Eucalyptus (for kids 3 and above), Citronella, Catnip, Neem, Garlic (ingested), Lotus and Black Pepper.
- A word of advice – just because these products are natural doesn't mean that they are 100% safe. Natural repellents can be dangerous if ingested, applied on cuts or wounds or sprayed into the eyes.

Bike Safety

As many of you have noticed, there has been a surge of popularity to biking in recent years. Here is some advice to ensure that your biking trips are as safe as you could be.

While you may not have ridden your bike with a helmet when you were a child, it's a must for kids these days. Over 250,000 kids make a visit to the emergency room every year with bike-related injuries, some resulting in death or severe brain injury. Some of these injuries could have been prevented by wearing a helmet. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) sets standards for helmets, so make sure to choose one with its safety seal on it.

While you are at it, check to see if the bike your child uses fit them. Have your child straddle the top bar of his or her 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.

Wishing you a healthy and safe summer,

David E. Simai M.D.