

The Wellness Family

Dr. Roller Keeps You Informed

Safe Summer Kids

The lazy days of summer are here: weekends now include playing catch with the kids in the backyard, swimming in the pool and having family and friends over for barbecues. It all sounds kind of picturesque, doesn't it? But just a few minor oversights can turn a leisurely afternoon into an evening spent in the emergency room. So, what can you do to make sure that doesn't happen? Dr. Roller has a few safety tips and recommendations.

Backyard Safety

You may be thinking to yourself, "My kids aren't toddlers anymore, I don't have to worry about this, do I?" Unfortunately, the answer to that question is, yes. It doesn't matter how old your kids are, there are a few things that should always be considered before letting your kids run unfettered and unmonitored through your backyard.

- Gardening tools should be stored in a tool shed or garage – it may seem comedic when seen on TV but stepping on a rake and having the handle jump up and hit your child in the face is anything but; it can knock out teeth, crack skulls and even damage eyes. Protect your child's feet by checking for sharp objects lying in your child's play area and requiring they wear shoes when outdoors.
- Lawnmowers and gas-powered tools should be locked up when not in use –these items contain gasoline and kids are natural explorers
- Keep walkways clear of objects, debris and overgrowth – during the summer kids tend to play outside until the very last minute and this can mean running around in the dark.

Check fences and playground equipment for exposed nails or screws – an ounce of prevention can save your child from a painful scrape or puncture wound.

Pool Safety

It takes as little as 2 inches of water and 2 seconds of time for a child to drown and brain damage is almost assured in 4 minutes. With this in mind it's important to prepare for a summer spent playing in the pool and

looking for ways to cool off. Some important tips to remember when the kids are preparing for the pool:

- Give your children your full attention – stay in full view and keep background noise to a minimum
- Always have your children wear personal flotation devices if they can't swim
- Teach young children to play within arm's reach
- Check for hazards in the pool prior to play – take out chlorine bobbles, pool cleaners and all non-age appropriate toys
- Alarm your pool area - www.safetyalarms.com offers several ways to secure your pool when it's not in use



“protect your child by checking for sharp objects in their play area”

Barbecue Safety

Having family and friends over for a barbecue is another popular way to spend a summer afternoon, however, a party atmosphere combined with a flaming pit filled with cooking food is a dangerous combination. Just a few simple precautions can keep the danger at a minimum during this classic summer pastime:

- Use pylons or sawhorses to mark a “caution zone” of at least three feet around the barbecue
- Never leave the barbecue pit or grill unattended
- Never allow a child to monitor the barbecue
- Once the fire has been started never add starter fluid and, if it flares up, raise the grill or spread out the charcoal – never dump water on a hot fire

continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Page 1 Safe Summer Kids

Page 2 Top Three Summer Safety Websites

- Always utilize long handled barbecue utensils to avoid burns or splatters
- Most importantly – keep a fire extinguisher handy

Food Safety

There are several potential hazards in food preparation and storage. Here are some important points to remember as you prepare for your barbecue.

Point 1 – When shopping for your barbecue make sure that the meat is always kept in it's own bag. This will avoid cross-contamination of your other food items or containers if the meat packaging leaks.

Point 2 – Never allow refrigerated items to remain in a parked car for more than 5 minutes or at room temperature more than 30 minutes. This means the first items to be put away upon entering the house are the items that need to be refrigerated. Regardless of whether or not you're going to be using them in your food preparation; put them away until you need them.

Point 3 – Always wash your hands *and* the cutting board between preparations. Skinning chicken for marinating, and then cutting the cabbage for coleslaw without washing everything first, is a sure way to spread salmonella and other bacteria. Avoid cross-contamination by washing your hands frequently when handling raw meat.

Point 4 – Always use a meat thermometer to test the center of a hamburger patty. The only way to kill E. coli bacteria is to heat the center of the patty to over 160 degrees and the only way to ensure that this has been accomplished is to use a meat thermometer. These can be found at most grocery stores for as little as \$2.

Point 5 – Cooked foods that are served cold should not be allowed to get to room temperature. They should be kept refrigerated until it is time to eat.

Point 6 – Never leave food out on the counter for longer than two hours regardless of whether or not someone at the barbecue may want a second helping.

Point 7 – If an item is left on the counter for an unknown amount of time it should be thrown away. If you don't know how long the potato salad has been sitting on the counter then "toss it"! It's better to be safe than sorry.

In Summary

Summertime can be an opportunity for a great deal of family fun that can be cut short prematurely if you're not careful. It's better to err on the side of caution than to end up in the emergency room. Take a moment today to go over your summertime habits and see what you can do to ensure your family's safety.

Did you know that the majority of childhood injuries occur between June and August?

Talk to Dr. Roller about ways that you can safeguard your children.

Top Three Summer Safety Websites

www.icpa4kids.org

<http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases>

www.redcross.org/services/hss/sumsafety/

Dear Parent,

Dr. Roller is dedicated to providing you with all the information necessary to help you make informed decisions when it comes to your family's health and well-being. Take a moment today to speak with him regarding any questions or concerns you may have about your family's overall wellness.

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