



PRESS RELEASE

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Release: April 14, 2008
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Holy Redeemer pediatrician urges children to play outside – but use common sense safety precautions

(PHILADELPHIA, PA) – Stinging sunburn, dive-bombing bees, perilous pools, hazardous playgrounds. Sometimes it can seem as if there are warnings all around us about the outdoor dangers facing children during the spring and summer months.

But according to Dr. David Cooperberg, a pediatric hospitalist working at Holy Redeemer Hospital and Medical Center’s emergency room, the benefits of outside play and exercise far outweigh the risk of injury. Just remember to take common sense precautions, he says.

“When nice weather returns, it’s good for children to get outside, ride bikes and play,” says Dr. Cooperberg. “Are there hazards involved with some of these activities? Of course there are. But as long as parents and children take a few simple safety precautions, many of the injuries that occur from these activities can be prevented.”

Dr. Cooperberg offers the following safety tips for some of the most popular outdoor activities:

- **Bikes, scooters and skateboards.** Children need to wear a helmet at all times, no matter how short a trip or how close to home. Many accidents happen in driveways, on sidewalks and on bike paths, not just on streets. Make sure the helmet fits snugly and meets safety standards. Don’t buy equipment that is too big for a child thinking he or she will “grow into it.” To prevent foot injuries, always wear closed-toe shoes when riding.
- **Pools.** Children should never be left alone in or near a pool, even for a moment. Teaching children how to swim does not mean they are safe in the water. They could slip off the ladder, trip over a rail or jump into a shallow pool and bump their head. Adult supervision is always needed for children around a pool. Having an older child supervise younger children is not good enough. Also, make sure all pool chemicals are secure and out of the reach of children.

- **Playgrounds.** Sixty percent of all playground injuries are caused by falls, so make sure there's a protective surface under and around all playground equipment. These surfaces can include at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand, pea gravel or rubber mats. Also, watch for potential hazards, including ropes or strings on clothing that can cause accidental strangulation.
- **Boating.** Make sure children wear life jackets at all times when on boats or near bodies of water. Life jackets should be the right size and not be loose. They should always be worn as instructed with all straps belted. Blow-up water wings, toys, rafts and air mattresses should never be used as life jackets or life preservers.
- **Sun.** Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside and reapply at least every two hours, or more often if in water or if excessively perspiring. Choose sunscreen that is made for children. Sunglasses with UV protection and a hat are also good ideas for sun protection. Babies under six months of age should be kept out of direct sunlight. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends avoiding direct sun exposure during peak hours, 10 am to 4 pm, by staying in shaded areas.
- **Bee stings.** Keep bees away by wearing light-colored clothing and avoiding scented soaps and perfumes. Don't leave food, drinks and garbage uncovered. Treat a bee sting by scraping the stinger away in a side-to-side motion with a credit card or a fingernail. After the stinger is out, wash the skin with soap and water. If you try to pull the stinger out with tweezers, you can inject more venom into the skin. If you know your child is allergic to bee stings have an Epi-Pen handy, use it and call 911 for immediate help.
- **Trampolines.** The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend or support the use of trampolines in backyards, playgrounds, etc., as there is a high association with orthopaedic injuries.

Holy Redeemer Hospital and Medical Center's emergency room (ER) focuses on you and your family. The new ER features private treatment rooms, 24/7 pediatric coverage, a digital radiology system and convenient bedside registration. Whether you need the life-saving capabilities of our certified primary stroke program, on-site cardiovascular center or have had a minor mishap, Holy Redeemer delivers the urgent care you need. For additional information about Holy Redeemer's new ER, visit www.holyredeemer.com or call 1-800-818-HRHS.

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