



# Get Up & Move!

Parent Newsletter

Series 3: May

## Outdoor Safety

The warm weather brings lots of opportunities to **Get Up and Move!** outside. But we all need to take special precautions when we play outside. One potential source of danger is the sun. We all need some sun exposure; it's our primary source of vitamin D, which helps our bodies absorb calcium. It doesn't take much time in the sun for most people to get the vitamin D they need, and unprotected exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can cause skin damage, eye damage, immune system suppression, and even cancer. It's important that parents teach their children how to enjoy fun in the sun safely.

- Avoid the strongest rays of the day
  - Avoid being in the sun for prolonged times when it's highest overhead and therefore the strongest (normally from 10 a.m to 4 p.m.). If your child is in the sun between these hours, use sunscreen.
  - Beware of "invisible sun." Even on cloudy, cool, or overcast days, UV rays travel through the clouds and burn the skin.
- Cover up
  - Bring along a wide umbrella or a pop-up tent to play in. Have your child wear a light-colored long-sleeved shirt if it's not too hot.
  - Don't forget about sunglasses! They can protect the eyes from UV rays.
- Use sunscreen
  - Use sunscreen whenever your child will be in the sun.
  - Apply sunscreen about 30 minutes before going outside. Don't forget about lips, hands, ears, feet, shoulders, and behind the neck. Lift up bathing suit straps and apply sunscreen underneath them.
  - Don't try to stretch out a bottle of sunscreen. Apply sunscreen generously and don't skimp!
  - Reapply sunscreen often, approximately every 2 to 3 hours or after your child is sweating or swimming.
  - Use waterproof sunscreen if your child will be around water or swimming. Water reflects and intensifies the sun's rays.
- Know how to treat a sunburn
  - Have your child take a cool bath or apply cool, wet compresses to the skin.
  - Apply pure aloe vera gel to any sunburned areas to relieve pain and help the healing process.
  - Give your child a pain reliever like acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
  - Apply topical moisturizing cream to rehydrate the skin. For severely burned areas, apply a thin layer of 1% hydrocortisone cream. Do not use petroleum-based products or products with benzocaine.
  - Keep your child in the shade until the sunburn is healed.

(Sources: [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov), [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org))