Keeping Kids and Teens Safe During the Summer

Summer is here and school is out! During the summer kids and teens have more freedom to spend their time as they please. For parents this is the time when you're trying to find the balance between allowing your child the freedom to make their own choices and mistakes and enforcing the rules to keep them safe.

Safe Kids Worldwide (www.safekids.org) is a global organization dedicated to protecting kids from unintentional injuries. Throughout the world, almost 1 million children die of injuries each year. But by working together and sharing information, there are things that everyone can do to ensure that the bumps and bruises of normal curiosity don't turn into more disabling injuries and deaths.

Below are some safety tips that you can implement today for a safer summer.

1. Biking. Actively supervise your children until you are comfortable that they are responsible enough to ride on their own. Model and teach good cycling behavior. Wear proper safety gear when biking such as helmets. Teach kids to keep an eye out for vehicles in driveways when riding on the sidewalk.

2. Swimming. Actively supervise children around open bodies of water. Infants, toddlers and small children should have your undivided attention in or around water. Educate your kids about swimming safety by enrolling in swimming lessons. Don't rely on swimming aids. Be sure to have a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal floatation device (PFD). Take time to learn CPR and teach your children CPR.

4. Medication. Make sure that all medications are stored out of the reach and sight of small children. If you have teens, check your bottles of medication periodically to see if the amount has decreased dramatically. Get rid of unused or expired medications. Keep the poison control number nearby. Consider products that you may not think about as medicine, such as eye drops, Neosporin, or rubbing alcohol.

6. Distracted Walking. Teach kids to limit cell phone use when walking. Look both ways before crossing the street. Make eye contact with the driver before crossing the street to be sure that they are aware of you. Keep headphone on a low volume when walking outside to stay aware of your surroundings.

7. Fire. Be sure that all fire alarms in your home are working. Teach kids never to play with matches, lighters or fireworks. Create and practice a home fire escape plan. Teach children how to respond to the sound of a smoke alarm. A child who is coached properly ahead of time will have a better chance to be safe.

Have a happy and safe summer!

For many more tips, tools, checklists and fact sheets, visit www.safekids.org for additional information.