



BC Children's Hospital, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, provides expert care for the province's most seriously ill or injured children, including newborns and adolescents. Children's is an academic health centre affiliated with the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, and the Child & Family Research Institute. For more information, please visit www.bcchildrens.ca.

The Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) plans, manages and evaluates selected specialty and province-wide health care services across BC, working with the five geographic health authorities to deliver province-wide solutions that improve the health of British Columbians. For more information, please visit www.phsa.ca.

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

BC Children's expert offers advice to keep summer safe June 26, 2007

Vancouver, B.C. – BC Children's Hospital has summer safety tips for parents and caregivers.

“Every year, the temperature rises and the number of preventable injuries involving children rises right alongside,” says Lidia Kemeny, Director of Child Health Awareness at BC Children's Hospital. “For example, there is a particular increase in falls from windows; sun and heat-stroke; drownings and near-drownings, not to mention those injuries resulting from summer activities like biking and blading. Burns from contact with hot barbecues and the straps of seat belts and car seats also put children at risk over the hot summer months. These incidents can have serious and tragic outcomes.”

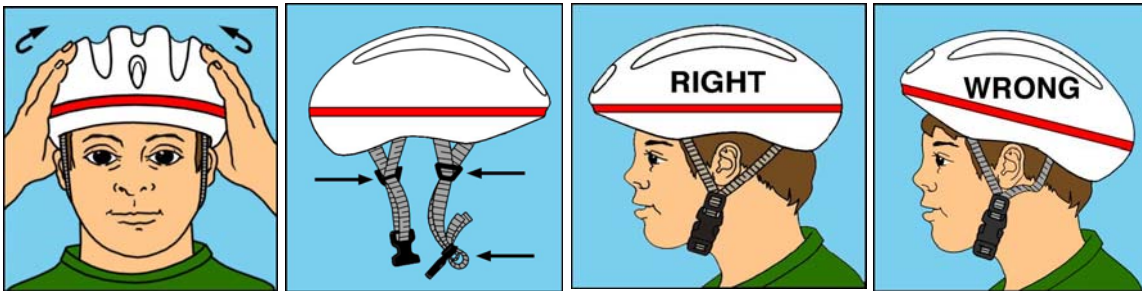
When the weather warms up, we all love to open the doors and windows to let in a cool breeze. But remember that children are natural climbers, and may not understand the risk. A window screen will not stop your child from falling from a window. To prevent children from climbing out, move furniture away from windows and balcony rails. Put window guards on windows above the ground level. These act like a gate in front of the window. Or fasten the windows so that they cannot open more than 10 centimetres (4 inches). In either case, ensure there is a safe release option in case of a house fire.

Never leave a child unattended near water. Children are drawn to water, but they do not understand the danger and can drown quickly and silently in less than two inches of water. This summer in Canada, at least one child will drown every two weeks and there will be a near-drowning each day. More than half of these children are under age five. Make sure children are supervised by an adult and children under five are kept within arm's reach. Use life jackets when children are near water. Backyard pools and ponds are especially dangerous. Be aware that young children can drown in small paddle pools and large buckets. Surround pools with a four-foot high, four-sided fence with a childproof gate. Avoid using the back of the house as a part of the fence, as children can still access the pool through the back door.

Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition in which the body's temperature rises far above normal. Every year, young children suffer injuries from being in parked cars that get too hot. Remember that the temperature inside a parked car can exceed 50 C (120 F) within 10-20 minutes on a typical hot summer day. In addition, buckles and straps of car seats can get hot enough to cause a burn on a child's delicate skin. If you have to park your car in direct sunlight, cover the car seat with a towel or blanket. It's best to keep babies under one year out of direct sunlight as much as possible.

Whenever they participate in activities such as biking, blading, or riding ATVs, ensure children are supervised and wearing protective gear, especially helmets. Teach them to obey safety precautions and operating instructions. No child under the age of 16 should operate an ATV.

Tips to ensure the purchase of the correct bicycle helmet (the 4 S's):



- Size:** try several different helmets before you buy one to ensure a good fit
- Strap:** the helmet should not move or rotate on your head
- Straight:** ensure that helmet is worn low on the forehead, just above eyebrows
- Sticker:** look for certification (i.e. CSA, Snell, ASTM, CPSC)