



NEWS RELEASE

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BC Children's experts offer advice to keep summer safe

Vancouver, B.C. – Experts at BC Children's Hospital are advising children and care givers about ways to stay safe this summer.

“Every year, the temperature rises and the number of preventable injuries involving children rises right alongside,” says Lidia Kemeny, Director of Child Health Awareness. “For example, there is a particular increase in falls from windows and sun and heat-stroke, drownings and near-drownings, not to mention those injuries resulting from summer activities like biking and blading. 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. To prevent children from climbing out, move furniture away from windows and balcony rails. Put window guards on windows above the main floor. 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 arms' reach. Use life jackets when they are near water. Backyard pools and ponds are especially dangerous. 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. Children's ability to regulate their body's temperature is not as adept as adults. Never leave a child unattended in the car, and protect tender skin from the sun's rays with sunscreen of 15 SPF or higher, sunsuits and a wide-brimmed hat. Keep babies under one year out of direct sunlight as much as possible.

Whenever they are participating 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.

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. For more information please visit www.bcchildrens.ca.

Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, offers specialized services to children with disabilities and their families from across the province. Sunny Hill serves children from birth to age 19. For more information please visit www.cw.bc.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.

BC Children's Hospital and Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children
Public Affairs & Communications
604-875-2301
paqc@cw.bc.ca