



KidsFirst

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A PUBLICATION FOR TEXAS CHILDREN'S HEALTH PLAN CHIP AND STAR MEMBERS AGES 7-12 AND THEIR PARENTS

Do your kids need a safe summer activity? Join the Boys & Girls Clubs at no cost to your family!

Active Texas Children's Health Plan members between the ages of 6 and 17 can sign up for free summer membership. Boys & Girls Clubs offer your child a safe and fun educational environment to thrive in during the summer. Your child will have access to meals, sports, the arts, and more character-building activities provided by positive role models!

To sign up, visit your local Boys & Girls Club. To find a participating Boys & Girls Club, go to bgcgh.org.

Questions? Visit texaschildrenshealthplan.org or contact Member Services at 1-866-959-2555 (STAR) or 1-866-959-6555 (CHIP).



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Safe fun in the sun

Summer is here and that means your family will be spending more time out in the sun. The sun's rays are extra strong during the summer, so it's very important to make sure your child's skin and eyes are protected from sun damage.

Too much exposure to the sun without protection can cause:

- Sunburns
- Skin damage, like wrinkles
- Eye damage, like cataracts (when the lens of your eye becomes cloudy)
- Skin cancer, like melanoma

Everyone needs sun protection, no matter how old you are or what your skin tone is. Even if your child's skin tone is dark, or if she easily gets a tan when she spends time in the sun, it's essential to protect her skin from the sun. Any tanning or burning causes skin damage, which could lead to skin cancer when your child gets older. Some people even develop skin cancer in their 20s.

Here's how to protect your child's skin and eyes from too much sun this summer:

- **Use sunscreen.** Doctors recommend that everyone should wear sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of 30 or higher, no matter what their skin tone is. Look for a sunscreen that's labeled "broad-spectrum" so that it protects your child from the two types of damaging sun rays. If she's going in the water, make sure you pick a sunscreen that is water-resistant. Apply the sunscreen to all exposed skin at least 15 minutes before your child goes out in the sun, then re-apply it every 2 hours OR after she gets out of the water.
- **Double-check your medicines.** Some medicines can make you more sensitive to the sun. Antibiotics, acne medicines, and psychiatric medicines can have this side effect. Check your child's prescription medicine labels or ask her doctor to learn if any medicines she is taking can make her more sensitive to the sun.
- **Avoid the strongest sun of the day.** The sun is strongest from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., so you should try to keep your child in the shade during those hours. If she does go out in the sun, apply and re-apply sunscreen. Most sun damage happens when you're doing daily activities, so it's important to protect your child even if she isn't at the beach or going swimming.
- **Cover up.** Make sure your child's clothes aren't see-through so that they protect her from too much sun exposure. Have your child wear a hat when she spends time outside. If you're going to an outdoor event or the beach, try to take breaks from the sun under a wide umbrella or in a shady spot.
- **Wear sunglasses.** The sun can damage your eyes as well as your skin. When you buy sunglasses for your child, the price tag or a sticker will usually tell how much UV protection they give. You'll want to buy a pair with 100% UV protection for your child's eyes.

Did you know?

Even when the sky is cloudy, the sun's rays can still damage your skin. Protect your child every day, even when the sun is "invisible"!

Tips for treating summer bug bites and stings

Ouch! Bug bites and stings are common during the summer, and in most cases they don't require medical care. Some kids are allergic to some bug bites or stings, though, which means that they should get medical attention.

Signs of a **mild** reaction:

- Red bumps
- Itchiness
- Mild swelling

If your child is experiencing these symptoms:

- If your child was stung and you can see the insect's stinger, remove it fast by scraping the skin horizontally with the edge of a credit card or your fingernail.
- Wash the area with the bite or sting with soap and water. Pat the area dry with a clean towel.
- Put ice or a cool wet cloth on the bite or sting to help the pain and swelling.

Signs of a **severe** allergic reaction:

- Swelling of the face or mouth
- Difficulty swallowing or speaking
- Chest tightness, wheezing, or difficulty breathing
- Dizziness or fainting

If your child is experiencing these symptoms:

- If your child has injectable epinephrine (like an EpiPen), give it to her right away, then call 9-1-1. If someone is with you, have that person call 9-1-1 while you give the epinephrine.
- Take your child to the nearest urgent care facility if:
 - The sting or bite is near or inside the mouth.
 - The area looks infected (more redness, warmth, swelling, pain, or pus occurring several hours or longer after the sting or bite).
 - You know your child has a severe allergy to an insect sting or bite.

Please note that this information is meant as a guide and for informational purposes only. The content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. If you are not sure if your child needs urgent or emergency care, go to the closest emergency room or call 9-1-1.



To help prevent bug bites or stings, make sure your child does not walk barefoot in the grass, play in areas where insects have nests, or drink from soda cans outside (which can attract bugs).

Bike helmet safety

Summer is the perfect time for kids to ride their bikes outside, but it's important to always make sure your child is wearing a helmet. This is important if he is riding a bike on his own or if he is riding with an adult. Many bike accidents involve a head injury, so a crash could mean permanent brain damage or even death for someone who isn't wearing a helmet.

Here are some tips to keep in mind when buying a bike helmet for your child:

- Pick bright or fluorescent colors that drivers and other cyclists can see easily.
- Look for a helmet that is well-ventilated, so your child doesn't overheat while biking.
- Make sure that the helmet has a CPSC or Snell sticker on the inside. These stickers mean that the helmet meets important safety standards.
- Make sure your child's helmet fits correctly and can be adjusted. Make sure that the straps are fastened, and that your child is not wearing any other hat underneath the helmet.

It's important that your child's helmet is made for biking. Most helmets are made for one kind of activity (like baseball or hockey), so make sure you buy one that is meant for biking.



Does this helmet fit?

A bike helmet fits well if it:

- Sits level on your child's head.
- Isn't tilted forward or backward.
- Has strong, wide straps that fasten tightly under the chin.
- Is tight enough to stop it from moving around if pulled or twisted.

Tasty tropical smoothie

Ingredients:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup frozen mango chunks
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup frozen pineapple chunks
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup low-fat vanilla yogurt

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender and mix until smooth.
2. Add a little water if the mixture doesn't blend easily.
3. Pour the smoothie into two glasses and enjoy!

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