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# PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN

JUNE 2011

## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: CAMPING

**S**ummer is a great time of year to take the kids outside and try something new. The science community is realizing that many children are not getting outside enough and that could be affecting their health! There is much competition to being outdoors: computers, video games, and TVs. These keep the children plugged-in and indoors. If your child does not like to go outdoors, trying to get them to go outside can be challenge. Try making it a family activity. Camping can be a great way to get the family outside for some fresh air. If you have never been camping or even if you go all the time, review some of the information below and enjoy some outdoor time this summer!

### Outdoor activities you can try while camping

Setting up the tent, preparing the campsite, and making the campfire are just a few of the things that need to be done to set up a campsite. Ask your child to gather small sticks for building the fire. Take the time to talk with your child about how to make a campfire or how to set up the tent. Keeping them busy will help take their minds off the TV, computer, and video games that they may be missing. Once everything is set-up, try going



for a walk or a hike. If you are at a state park, they will have maps of the hiking trails. If you are camping in the backyard, take a walk around the neighborhood together. Take the time to notice the different types of trees and animals that are around your campsite.

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*Bring plenty of water — limit soda because it can cause dehydration.*

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Some of the state parks have nature centers. Here your family can learn more about the nearby area. If there is a pond or lake near your campsite, you may want to try taking everyone fishing.

## Supplies you will need

There are certain items that you will want to make sure you bring with you when you go camping. You will need a tent or some sort of cover and sleeping materials. If you are sleeping in a tent, remember you will basically be sleeping on the ground — extra padding may be wanted! You will also want to make sure you have extra clothes for everyone. It may get chilly once the sun goes down. You will also want to bring some sunscreen and insect repellent to protect the skin while you are camping. It is also a good idea to bring along a first aid kit. If you do not have a kit, make sure to bring a few needed items such as adhesive bandages and headache medicine. You will want a flashlight and a few extra batteries just in case the ones in the flashlight run out of power.

Other items that you might want to bring with you include: a radio, camera, camp chairs, something to read, playing cards or games and some binoculars.

## Be safe

It is important to be safe when you are camping. Follow these tips:

- **Practice fire safety** — Fire can be very dangerous. If you are at a campsite, make sure to create your campfire in the designated spot. It is also helpful to have a bucket of water near the fire in case of emergencies. Make sure you talk to your children about the dangers of fires and burns before you go on the trip and once again after a fire is built.
- **Avoid wild animals** — Make sure to follow the campground rules about wild animals. Avoid feeding wild animals.



- **Avoid bug bites** — Make sure to wear insect repellent when the family is outside so that everyone does not get bites from mosquitoes, ticks, or other insects.
- **Practice water safety** — If you are near water, or go swimming, make sure that everyone has a buddy and that everyone follows the rules of the swimming area.

Camping can be a great way to get the entire family outside. Follow some of these guidelines and be prepared for a great time with your kids!

## REFERENCES:

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## PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN JUNE 2011

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