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PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN

JULY 2011

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: WATER SAFETY

When the weather starts to get warmer, many people love to go swimming. Swimming is a great way to be active and have fun! In Kentucky we have many pools, lakes, and ponds that you may enjoy visiting this summer. If you are going on vacation, you may be going to a beach. No matter what you are doing this summer, it is important to teach your child water safety. You should be aware of some water hazards yourself.

General water safety

- There should always be an adult with a child while swimming.
- Always swim with a buddy, this goes for you and your child.
- Always follow any posted rules.
- Do not go swimming in the dark.
- Stop swimming as soon as you hear thunder or see lightening. Leave the water area immediately.
- Make sure everyone is wearing sunscreen. You will need to reapply it every 2 hours.

Follow these safety guidelines for the different types of water that you may enjoy this summer.

**Pool safety**

- Do not let children go into a pool unless an adult is with them.
- Remind children that fences and gates are there for a reason — to keep them safe!
- No one should ever run near a pool. The edges may be slick leading to a serious fall.
- Make sure to bring snacks if you will be at the pool all day. Children should not eat and play at the same time — they may choke.

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Lake and pond safety

- You may not know the depth of the water. Always be extra careful when jumping in.
- There may be trash or glass that can hurt you or your child's feet. Wear foot protection while in the water.
- Remind your children there may be fish swimming in the lake or pond. They should not be afraid if one brushes up against them.
- If your family will be in a boat, make sure everyone is wearing a life jacket. You never know what could happen if the boat were to turn over. Set a good example by wearing one too!

Beach safety

- Always look for flags or signs to let you know about the strength of the waves. When the waves are strong you and your family will need to take extra care in the water.
- Talk to your family about avoiding jellyfish. They sometimes are floating by the shore. Jellyfish can sting and blister the skin. If your child gets stung, rinse the area with sea water. If they start to feel sick, call your doctor.
- Make sure you and your family do not swim out too far.

Water parks

- Talk to your family about the importance of reading all of the rules and signs at the water park.
- Remind your children to always listen to the lifeguards instructions.
- If you have older children, set up a meeting spot in case you get separated.

Avoid getting sick from the water your family is swimming, splashing, or wading in.

- Do not swallow the water and avoid getting it into your mouth.
- Wash your body and hands before getting



into the water. Germs on the body get into the water.

- If you are not feeling well, you should not go swimming.
- Take bathroom breaks often. You may have to remind your children to go to the bathroom.
- When you are finished swimming make sure everyone washes their entire body with soap.

If you or your children do not know how to swim contact the American Red Cross or local community center for information about swim lessons.

Stay safe this summer and enjoy the water!

REFERENCES:

- Dowshen, Steven. Water Safety TeensHealth.org July 2009
- Dowshen, Steven. Swimming Teenshealth.org April 2008
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Six Steps for Healthy Swimming. April 2010

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