



## Play it Safe!

Summer is almost here! For many families that means spending time outdoors and participating in summer sports programs. While kids will be kids, and some cuts and bruises along the way are inevitable, keep reading for tips on playing safely and preventing injuries.

### At the playground:

- Check playgrounds where your children play. Look for age-appropriate equipment and hazards such as rusted or broken equipment and dangerous surfaces. Report any hazards to the school or city.
- Remove hood and neck drawstrings from all children's clothing to avoid strangulation hazards on playgrounds.
- Make sure children wear their helmets on their bikes but then remove bike helmets before playing on any playground equipment.
- Carry with you an emergency kit that includes any special medications or supplies that your child may need.
- Teach children proper playground behavior: no pushing, shoving or crowding. Tell them what equipment is appropriate for their age levels.

### On the field:

- Before beginning a sport, all children should get a general health exam.

- Find out all you can about the person who is taking care of your child while playing or doing sports. Does the coach have a state or nationally approved certificate to coach this sport? Is he/she certified in CPR, and is a first aid kit available? Is a certified athletic trainer available to provide instruction and rehabilitation?
- Talk to the coordinator or coach to make sure the following are included: proper physical and psychological conditioning, appropriate safety equipment, a safe playing environment, adequate adult supervision, enforcement of safety rules, and an emergency medical plan
- Children should be physically and psychologically conditioned for activities, instructed in basic skills, and matched with other kids of similar skill level, weight and maturity.



- Check athletic grounds for hazards (rocks, holes, water, etc.). Also consider current and potential weather conditions (e.g. lightning).
- Make sure your children always wear appropriate safety gear and equipment that fits properly. Protective gear is sport-specific and may include mouth guards, shin pads, helmets, elbow pads, knee pads, safety goggles, etc.
- Ensure that children warm up and stretch before playing.
- Make sure your children are supervised by an adult at all times. All safety rules should be strictly enforced.
- Dehydration in young athletes is a serious concern. Make sure your kids drink adequate liquids prior to, during and following athletic activities.
- Kids should receive adequate rest breaks during practice and games. They should not be expected to "play through an injury".
- Parents and coaches should be role models by practicing good sportsmanship and playing by the rules.
- Prepare for an emergency by providing your child's coach with important information: parents' names, addresses, phone numbers, and any medical conditions or allergies affecting the athlete.

## The Best Toys for Your Child's Age\*

### 0-1 Year

- Crib gyms
- Floor activity centers
- Squeaky toys

### 1-3 Years

- Large blocks
- Push and pull toys
- Books

- Pounding and shaping toys

### 3-5 Years

- Nontoxic art supplies
- Pretend toys (e.g., play money, telephone)
- Teddy bears or dolls
- Outdoor toys such as a tricycle (with a helmet)

### 5-9 Years

- Arts and crafts kits
- Jump ropes
- Miniature dolls
- Action figures

\*Always follow manufacturer's age suggestions and safety warnings.

The Berrien County Health Department has five locations to serve you:

#### Benton Harbor

769 Pipestone  
P.O. Box 706  
926-7121

M-139 Office  
2106 S. M-139  
927-5623

School Based  
870 Colfax Ave  
925-4500

#### Niles

1205 N. Front St.  
684-2800

#### Three Oaks

21 N. Elm  
756-2008

Or visit us on the web at [www.berriencohlthdept.org](http://www.berriencohlthdept.org)

### Berrien County Health

**Department:**  
Preventing Disease,  
Prolonging Life and  
Protecting the  
Health of the  
Community.



## May Is Summer Safety Month

Summer is coming!! May is Summer Safety Month, and the health department will have articles about food safety, water safety, skin cancer prevention, outdoor injury prevention, and safe graduation parties. For questions about any of these topics, call us at **926-7121**.

### Unintentional Injury Statistics:

- Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death for children ages 1-14 in Michigan
- Unintentional injuries due to fires, motor vehicle crashes, drowning, and poisonings account for more than 40 percent of deaths in the U.S. for ages 15 to 24 and for nearly a fifth of all deaths for those aged 25 to 44.
- Unintentional home injury child deaths are caused by fire and burns, suffocation, drowning, firearms, falls, choking and poisoning.

### Please keep safety first!



For more information, contact the Health Department at:

**926-7121**

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