

## Fun on Wheels

In-line skating, skateboarding, bicycling and scooter riding are all popular activities for kids.

Wearing the right gear helps prevent serious injuries, including head injuries. As they start to learn wheel activities, kids should begin practicing these safety pointers:

- Always wear an approved helmet that fits snugly and correctly. It should sit level on the head, not slanted back. The straps should always be securely fastened.
- Wear other protective gear, such as wrist guards, knee and elbow pads, for skating and skateboarding. Only knee and elbow pads are recommended for scooter riding, as wrist guards make it harder to steer.
- Before going down hills or into crowded areas, children should feel comfortable riding the equipment, be able to stop and be in control.



Help  
keep me  
safe  
when I'm  
playing!



### Safety Resources

**U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:** [www.cpsc.gov/tips.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/tips.html) or CPSC Hotline 1-800-638-2772

**National Center for Injury Prevention and Control:** [www.cdc.gov/ncipc](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc) or 1-770-488-1506

**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:** [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov) or NHTSA Hotline 1-888-327-4236

**Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene:** [www.dhmd.state.md.us](http://www.dhmd.state.md.us) or 410-767-5780

**National SAFE KIDS Campaign:** [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org) or 202-662-0600

**National Program for Playground Safety:** [www.uni.edu/playground](http://www.uni.edu/playground) or 1-800-554-PLAY

**American Red Cross:** [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or 410-764-4609

The services and facilities of the Anne Arundel County Department of Health are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, political affiliation or opinion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation or disability.  
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## Learn To Live

Healthy Living From The Anne Arundel County Department Of Health  
[www.aahealth.org](http://www.aahealth.org)

410-222-7979

# Playing it Safe



How to Prevent  
Injuries when  
Children Play Outside

## Learn To Live

Healthy Living From The Anne Arundel County Department Of Health  
[www.aahealth.org](http://www.aahealth.org)

Every year, 20 to 25 percent of all children are injured and need to be treated by a doctor. In the U.S., more than 200,000 children under age 14 will be taken to the emergency room this year due to playground-related injuries.

However, most injuries are preventable. Age-appropriate equipment, gear and supervision can greatly reduce the chance of injury. For example, having your child wear a bike helmet can reduce the risk of brain injury by 88 percent.

Providing safe, age-appropriate outside play is a fun way for your child to develop and learn while maintaining physical fitness. Being fit improves health greatly and actually reduces the severity of injuries, so don't be afraid to let your child be active. Inactivity leads to being overweight and reduces muscle strength and balance, so make sure your child has plenty of active time.

This brochure will give you some helpful tips to keep playtime fun and safe.

## The Play Area Inspection

Check the play area and make sure it is free of any hazards. Look over your child's play equipment while teaching your child to do the same. Look for worn or loose parts and replace them. On wheeled equipment, check brakes, gears and wheels to make sure parts are working properly.

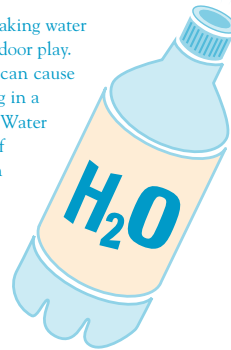
Check playground equipment for loose or missing railings, sharp edges, bolts that stick out, and open "S" hooks. In addition, make sure openings between rails, platforms and ladder rungs are large enough or small enough to prevent a child's head from getting caught.

## The Sun Factor

Protect children from the sun's damaging rays. Suntans and sunburns in childhood greatly increase the risk of getting skin cancer later in life. Always apply a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher before taking your child out to play. In addition, try to avoid outside play during midday, when the sun's rays are the strongest. Cover up by using a lightweight long-sleeved shirt, wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses. All protective clothing and sunscreen should block the sun's harmful UVA and UVB rays.

## The Hydration Station

Keep kids hydrated by taking water breaks during their outdoor play. Not drinking enough can cause dehydration resulting in a heat-related illness. Water is the best source of fluid, especially on warm days.



## Playground Protection

Falls account for the majority of injuries that occur on playgrounds. Use this safety checklist to prevent playground injuries:

- Guide children to play on age-appropriate equipment.
- To help prevent injuries from falling, surfaces around and under playground equipment should be covered with at least 12 inches of loose fill, such as wood chips, mulch or sand. Avoid hard surfaces such as concrete, grass, asphalt, dirt and hard-packed earth.
- Make sure children are wearing shoes with traction and not wearing helmets, hoods, drawstrings or other clothes that can get caught on equipment.

## Water, Water Everywhere

Practice these safety tips as your kids cool off with fun and refreshing time in the water:

- Swim in areas where a lifeguard is on duty and stay within sight of the lifeguard.
- Keep pools and spas safe with four-sided fencing, self-closing gates and secured pool covers. Be sure above-ground pool ladders are removed or locked when not in use. Make sure unsupervised children cannot easily reach neighborhood pools, spas or ponds.
- Keep safety equipment by the pool, dock or in the boat such as a life ring or shepherd's crook. Have a cordless telephone readily available to call for help in an emergency.
- Constantly watch children around wading pools, swimming pools, ponds or other bodies of water. This is especially

important since there is often no splashing or other noise when a child is drowning. A child can drown in less than two inches of water, so empty and turn over wading pools, tubs and buckets when not in use.

- Children over four years of age should begin learning how to swim, but even good swimmers should never swim alone.
- Children should wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket when on a boat or when participating in water sports.
- Don't let children swim or walk in unfamiliar waters, or dive into water less than nine feet deep.
- Remember the sun safety recommendations and reapply sunscreen after water play or as instructed on the bottle.

*All parents should learn CPR. Drowning victims who get immediate CPR are more likely to live. Contact the American Red Cross to learn about classes in your area.*

