Summer Safety Tips & 10 Fireworks Safety Tips

1. Fireworks packaged in brown paper are made for professional displays – avoid buying.
2. Always have an adult supervise fireworks activities, especially with sparklers.
3. Back up to a safe distance immediately after lighting fireworks.
4. Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
5. Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy in case of fire and to douse used fireworks before discarding in trash.
6. Never allow young children to play or ignite fireworks.
7. Never carry fireworks in a pocket or shoot them off in metal or glass containers.
8. Never try to re-light or pickup fireworks that have not ignited fully.
9. Never place a part of your body directly over a firework device when lighting.
10. Make sure fireworks are legal in your area before buying or using them.

How to Treat Sunburn:
- If your child does get a sunburn, the best remedies are cold compresses, over-the-counter pain relievers, and aloe preparations.

Keep Kids Cool
- As temperatures rise, heat exhaustion becomes a concern. Symptoms include fatigue, extreme thirst, and muscle cramping.
- If a person doesn't cool down and rehydrate herself, heat exhaustion can lead to heatstroke (signs are headaches, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and lack of sweat), which is potentially fatal.

How to Treat:
- If you notice heat illnesses in kids, spray them with cold water from a bottle or hose, fan them, and get them into the shade. Ice packs to the groin and armpits can speed up the cooling process even more.
- If you suspect heatstroke, call 911.

Special Concerns:
- Infants are vulnerable to heat-related illness, so keep them in air-conditioned areas when possible.
- Never leave kids or your pets in unattended cars, even with the windows cracked.

Use Caution When in Water
- Drowning is the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death among children ages 1 to 4. (Stanford Med.)
- The American Academy of Pediatrics says parents should not enroll children under age 4 in formal swimming lessons that teach water survival skills.
- If you want them to play in water, supervise them within arm’s reach, even in shallow water.

Special Concerns:
- When choosing a flotation device, go for a child-size life vest. Little arms are less likely to slip out than they are with water wings.
- When compared with using a swim ring, there’s less chance of tipping over.
- Also, take a CPR course (find your local American Red Cross chapter at redcross.org) so you’ll be prepared in case of a near-drowning incident.
- Burns and Poisonous Plants

Guard Against Burns
- About half of all accidental burns that occur each year happen to kids under age 4.
- That’s why you shouldn’t leave a small child unattended around hot appliances, such as a grill or a stove, and why you should keep kids at a distance while you’re cooking. Also keep sparklers away from children.

How to Treat:
- First-degree burns are painful and red but don’t blister. To care for these minor burns, hold the area under running cool tap water for about five to 10 minutes.
- There’s no need to use topical creams or ointments, and don’t apply ice, as this can lead to frostbite and delay healing. Place a loose, sterile dressing over the site, and keep it clean with soap and water as it heals.

Special Concerns:
- Second-degree burns are deeper and typically blister (don’t pop the bubbles).
- Contact your child’s doctor if you suspect this. Third-degree burns are even more serious and appear white, waxy, or black.
- Often, they are so deep that the area feels numb. These burns require immediate medical attention.
Avoid Poisonous Plants
To further help you sidestep these summer spoilers, here's information on recognizing these plants:

- Poison ivy grows as a vine or shrub in the grass or on trees.
- Poison oak grows only as a shrub, usually in the western United States.
- Poison sumac is a tall shrub or small tree found in wooded areas of eastern states.

The good news:
The rashes (caused by oils from these plants) aren't contagious.

- Once the skin has been washed and clothing is removed, the rashes can't spread.
- Poison Ivy -- Look for three pointed, notched leaves per stem.
- Poison Sumac -- Six to 12 leaves grow in pairs with a single leaf topping stems.
- Poison Oak -- Looks like poison ivy, but tips of leaves are rounded.

How to Treat:
- If your child's skin comes in contact with one of these plants, you have a window of about 10 minutes to wash away the rash-causing oil.
- If you don't catch it in time, a rash may develop within 12 hours.
- Use topical hydrocortisone cream and an oral antihistamine to calm the itch.

Special Concerns:
- If the rash involves the eyes or if it covers a large portion of her body, contact your pediatrician.
- Oral steroids may be recommended for severe cases.

Beware of Bee Stings
Bees are attracted to flowers, so don’t put fragrances or floral-patterned clothing on kids. Likewise, don’t leave out open containers of food and drink, and if your kid’s clothes get stained, change them. Should a bee land on or next to your child, remain calm and gently blow it away.

How to Treat:
- If your child gets stung, brush the stinger away with the edge of a credit card.
- Next, apply a salve of one part meat tenderizer to four parts water and leave it on the area for about 30 minutes to neutralize the venom.
- Then apply cold compresses and topical hydrocortisone cream, and give an oral antihistamine to reduce swelling. You could also apply a paste of baking soda and water.

Special Concerns:
- Bee stings often look worse the next day -- skin reactions are normal and may last up to a week.
- But some people have severe allergic reactions to bee stings that include all-over hives, difficulty breathing, dizziness or fainting, and swelling of the lips and tongue.
- These can be life-threatening reactions that require immediate medical help.
- If your child has this allergy, his doctor will prescribe an injectable form of epinephrine, a lifesaving medicine.

Bug Bites, Swimmer’s Ear, and Food Poisoning

Bypass Bug Bites
- When outside, cover children with lightweight clothing and use mosquito netting over strollers and infant seats.
- Ticks are also a concern, so check your child’s body for them at the end of each day spent outside.

When choosing bug repellents this summer, know that the most effective products contain DEET because it’s proven to repel both mosquitoes and ticks. Products with a DEET concentration of less than 30 percent are safe for kids, but not for babies under 2 months old. Apply the repellent once a day and don’t use combination sunscreen/bug repellent products. All-natural repellents, such as lemon eucalyptus and citronella, aren’t proven to protect against ticks, nor should they be used in children younger than 3 years. It’s safe to apply them on older kids.

How to Treat:
- Topical antihistamine preparations can help relieve the itch of mosquito bites.
- If you find a tick on your kid, use tweezers to pull it off by its head.
- Ticks have to be embedded in the skin for about 24 hours to transmit germs. If you suspect a tick has been on your child for this long, contact your pediatrician.

Avert Swimmer’s Ear:
- It’s an infection of the outer ear canal, and pain is the earliest symptom.
- As it progresses, you might see drainage from your child’s ear and extreme tenderness when her earlobe or the outer part of the ear is tugged.
- Because swimmer’s ear is caused by germs that invade the ear canal due to excess moisture, dry the outside part of the ears after water play.
- Note: How to Treat: Apply prescribed antibiotic drops and curb pool time.

Steer Clear of Food Poisoning:
If you’re outside at a picnic and can’t wash your hands (or your kids’ hands), use an antibacterial hand gel. Clean all raw fruits and vegetables, and keep raw meats separate from cooked foods. Wash food-preparation surfaces and utensils well, and cook all food thoroughly. If you’re marinating food, make sure it’s in the refrigerator or a cooler.

The FDA recommends keeping cold food at a temperature of less than 40 F. Make sure to refrigerate all uneaten food, not just foods containing mayonnaise, after one hour if the outdoor temperature is above 90 F., or after two hours any other time.

How to Treat:
Signs of food poisoning include nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Usually there’s blood in the stool, as well as a fever. If you suspect that your child has it, contact his doctor. Treatment involves fluids, rest, and a bland diet, but the illness may require medical attention.

Ref: Parents Magazine, National Safety Council and MIOSHA, OSHA