

Health Happenings

June 2010

(A Monthly Newsletter by our CYSS Nurse)

Summer months are long awaited for... the picnics, family vacations, leisure trips to the local pool. What do these summer fun time outings have in common? Exposure to the sun's harmful rays, specifically the ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) sun rays.

Sunscreen agents and limiting exposure time in the sun are two ways to prevent sunburn. Sunscreen with a minimum of SPF 15 is used in our CDCs. The sun protection factor (SPF) that you find on the label of sunscreen tells you the minimum amount of UVB sunlight that is needed with that particular product to produce redness on sunscreen-protected skin as compared with unprotected skin. The higher the SPF, the more protection against the sun's harmful rays.

A Basic Care Item form is to be filled out and signed by you, the parent/guardian, for use of sunscreen in our facilities. Although current guidance states sunscreen usage in our CDCs is applicable for ages 4 weeks - 6 years, studies show that sunscreen agents on infants less than 6 months of age should not be used unless otherwise indicated on the product label. The sunscreen is applied approximately 30 minutes before exposure to the sun so that it can be absorbed by the skin and less likely to wash off when perspiring. Reapplication should be approximately every 80 minutes and after swimming or sweating excessively. Application of sunscreen by CDC staff will be documented on a Medical Dispensation Card (DA Form 5225-R). All areas exposed to the sun (including the ears, nose, back, shoulders, back of the knees and legs) are to be covered with a generous amount of sunscreen. Lotion sunscreen products are preferred for use in children as alcohol-based sunscreen products can cause skin irritations and are flammable. Current DA guidance prohibits the use of all aerosol products in CYS facilities, therefore aerosol sunscreen products must be replaced by comparable sunscreen lotions, gels, or creams. Expired sunscreen products must be replaced in a timely fashion. Exposure to extreme temperatures can shorten sunscreen's shelf-life, so it's safest to use a new bottle(s) every summer season.

Many people think wearing a tee-shirt when swimming provides protection, but a wet tee-shirt only has a UV protection measure of SPF 4. Be sure to apply sunscreen even under clothes. Try to keep a sun/baseball hat and/or a pair of sunglasses at the childcare facility, too. This habit will help prevent sun damage to the eyes (cataract formation). Our providers try their best to minimize your child's exposure to the sun between the hours of 1000 and 1400 when the sun is at its peak strength.

Together we can work towards providing a safe, fun, and memorable summer-time experience for your child by following these simple guidelines. Now, pass the potato salad!

*Web editor note - If you would like to talk to our *CYSS* Nurse about children's health issues or you would like more information about the above newsletter please call (309) 782-2526.