

6 Camp Safety Tips

For some children, there can be nothing more thrilling than the opportunity to attend summer camp, whether it be a local day camp or an overnight camp. Regardless of which option, there are several actions parents and guardians can take to help their little camper have a fun and safe experience according to Derek Trapasso, MD, Medical Director, MassGeneral for Children Pediatric Hospitalist Program at Norwood Hospital.



- 1. Water Safety:** While there is supervision at camp, all children should be counseled never to swim alone. Also, during swim time, children should become familiar with the adult supervisor, be it a camp counselor or lifeguard.
- 2. Sun Safety:** Before sending off your camper, make sure to have them, or help them, apply sunscreen. Sunscreen of at least SPF 30 should be applied 20 to 30 minutes before sun exposure and be reapplied every two hours throughout the day. Regardless of the type of sunscreen, most will wash off in water so reapplication after swimming or water-related activities should be stressed.
- 3. Insect/Bug Safety:** The key to insect and bug safety is to prevent bites by applying a bug spray before outdoor activity. Parents should read the insect repellent instruction label thoroughly to determine the best application. In addition, check for ticks at the end of each day. Ticks love warm, damp places on the body so pay special attention to the joints, including under the arms and behind the knees as well as your child's hair.
- 4. Heat Safety:** Fun in the sun, particularly when you are a kid, may not always include proper hydration. Remind your camper to take frequent water breaks during outdoor activities, especially on hot, sunny days. Heat-related illnesses can creep up, and children should alert a counselor or other adult if they feel dizzy, tired, or confused for immediate evaluation and care.
- 5. Animal Safety:** Outdoors animals are considered wild, so it is a good rule never to try to touch one. Campers may come across small or baby animals or injured animals and want to help. Under no circumstances should an animal be touched as it is unknown if the animal is sick, dangerous, or potentially has rabies.
- 6. Vaccination:** While camp does require an updated immunization and a physician-signed yearly well-visit report, parents should make sure that their child's tetanus is current. At around age 10 to 11, with a regular vaccination schedule, parents should work with their pediatrician to determine if a tetanus booster shot is needed.

Like most things with our children, we want to balance fun and safety and stressing these 6 tips can help everyone have a great camp experience.

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