

Water is the Best Choice

Swimming Safety

Clean water and...

Team Spotlight



July 2011



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Water is the Best Choice

Living in Florida poses a challenge for keeping children and adolescents well hydrated, especially if they are engaged in sports and/or strenuous activities. Additional liquids can often be overlooked by athletes, coaches, and parents. It is important to know that during exercise, perspiring youngsters lose fluid that must be replaced to prevent dehydration and overheating. Common symptoms of dehydration include: intense thirst, muscle cramps, weakness, headache, nausea, fatigue, dizziness, and decreased performance. However, these symptoms tend to be later findings, and it is better to teach kids to recognize earlier and milder symptoms, or even better, prevent dehydration all together.

To avoid dehydration, athletes should drink plenty of water before exercising, and at regular intervals during exercise, even if they are not thirsty. This is particularly important when exercising in hot weather. Fluid intake needs can vary widely from child to child, based on his or her body size, level

of physical activity, and the weather. Drinking 4 to 8 oz of water every 15 to 20 minutes during exercise serves most school-age children and adolescents well.

Thanks to persuasive advertising, many children and their coaches believe that commercially prepared electrolyte or sports drinks have some advantages over water. These drinks do provide some replacements for the salts and sugars that are lost with vigorous exercise. However, they may be high in sugar, which can sometimes cause cramps, nausea, and diarrhea. Despite its simplicity, water is usually the best choice.



www.healthychildren.org
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Swimming Smarts

It is important to practice your swimming smarts when spending time in water, whether it is in your backyard pool, the open ocean, and even during bath time. In Florida, drowning is the number one cause of death between the ages of 12 months and 4 years, and it is the second leading cause of accidental death for people between the ages of 5 and 24. Most water-related incidents can be avoided by knowing how to stay safe and what to do in the case of an emergency. Below are some simple guidelines to consider before taking a dip:

The Buddy System

Always have a partner to swim with. In the event of an emergency, you can help each other or one person can call for help.

Get Certified

Knowing simple life-saving skills can make the difference between life and death. Organizations such as the YMCA or the Red Cross frequently offer free classes in CPR and rescue techniques.

Swim in Safe Areas

It is best to stick to places that have a lifeguard on duty, especially when swimming in an open body of water. Rip currents, storms, and other dangers are often unpredictable. Lifeguards are trained to respond in these types of situations.

Boating

Each year, boating accidents cause more deaths than airplane crashes and train wrecks. Taking proper precautions can ensure that boating is a fun and safe activity for the family. Make sure the captain or person driving the boat is experienced and able. Pay attention to warnings posted by the coast guard, and always drink responsibly. Alcohol is related to 1/3 of boating deaths, so it is important to know your limit, even if you are not the person handling the boat. The U. S. Coast Guard also warns against boater's fatigue—a condition in which the wind, noise, heat, and vibrations of the boat combine to wear you out.

PFD

It is Florida law for children under the age of six to wear a personal flotation device, although it is recommended for everyone on the boat to wear a PFD, or have one readily accessible. Wearing a PFD is equivalent to wearing a helmet while biking; although it may take some time getting used to, it can save your life.

Layers of Protection

Keep your children safe by having a fence around your pool, putting childproof locks on doors, and removing ladders from above ground pools. Implementing two or more of these precautions is important in case one does not do its job.

Escape the Grip of the Rip

Rip currents occur when water is channeled away from the beach and out to sea, and they form when there are breaking waves in the ocean. They are difficult to predict, but look for churning or choppy water, a line of foam or debris heading out to sea, a break in wave patterns, and areas of water that are a different color. If you are caught in a rip current don't panic; stay calm and conserve your energy. Swim parallel to shore to escape the rip current. Do not swim toward the shore because the rip current will pull you farther out to sea, and you will tire easily. If you cannot escape the rip current, float or tread water to prevent exhaustion. Wait until you are out of the rip current before swimming to shore, or wave your hands and shout to attract attention to lifeguards and people on the beach. If a friend is caught in a rip current, do not swim out and try to save him or her. Get a lifeguard, or call 911 if one is not available.

Supervise

Never leave a child alone in a bathtub, swimming pool, or open water. A child can drown in only 2 inches of water. Always remain in reach of your child should an accident occur.

For More tips on staying safe in the water, visit www.kidshealth.org or www.safekids.org/child-water-safety

Clean water and...

LIFE EXPECTANCY

At the start of the 20th century, life expectancy of a baby born in America was approximately 35-40 years. This was about the same as it was for a baby born in Ancient Greece. So, for approximately 2000 years, life expectancy was relatively unchanged. During the 20th century, however, this number would increase dramatically, and a baby born today in the United States has a life expectancy of approximately 75 years. What is responsible for this remarkable and sudden jump towards living longer?

TWO BIG REASONS

What may surprise many is that this huge improvement has not resulted from technological advances such as CT scans and MRIs, improved surgical techniques or cancer treatments, or even the advent of antibiotics. Though all of these have impacted medical care in great ways, the dramatic near-doubling life expectancy that occurred during the 20th century was primarily the result of a few public health measures, including cleaner, safer water and the reduction/elimination of illnesses through vaccination.

CLEAN WATER

In order to appreciate how far we have come in terms of cleaner, safer water supply, it is instructive to look back at recent history, while also observing a current situation with one of our neighbors...

Typhoid (aka "Typhoid Fever") as a common killer at the beginning of the 20th century. It is estimated that Typhoid killed as many soldiers in the Civil War as the total number of American deaths in the Vietnam War. Many famous people from history died from typhoid infection, including Abigail Adams, Wilbur Wright, and one of Abraham Lincoln's sons. Stanford University was founded in memory of Leland Stanford Jr. by his parents after he died from typhoid. Though improved sanitation and the development of an effective vaccine, typhoid cases have been virtually eliminated in the United States (most cases that occur are acquired internationally), though it continues to be a threat in many parts of the world.

Cholera is another disease that occurs due to contaminated water. While it has been approximately 100 years since the United States has experienced an outbreak of cholera, one of our neighbors, Haiti (do you realize Haiti is closer to Orlando than Washington DC?), is currently in the middle of a cholera epidemic that has caused over 400,000 cases and over 5,000 deaths?

VACCINES

The science of vaccines (and their success in eliminating or reducing infectious diseases) is far and away the most significant medical advance of the last 100 years. Our children today have the potential to be protected from so many illnesses that threatened the previous generations. A few of the highlights:

*Smallpox: Probably no infectious disease has killed as many people as smallpox. In the 20th century alone, it is estimated that 400 million people died from small-

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pox. In the 1950s, 2 million people worldwide were still dying every year from smallpox. The eradication of smallpox through a successful worldwide vaccination program is one of the most remarkable accomplishments of medicine, and even though this is a fairly recent event, it is hardly ever talked about. *Polio: Prior to the development of the polio vaccine, there were 2000 deaths each year from polio and many more cases resulting in paralysis. *Similar stories could be told for diphtheria, measles, rubella (causing birth defects), and more recently certain types of bacterial meningitis, chicken pox, rotavirus, and more. All told, our children have the potential to be protected from 14 serious illnesses through vaccinations (not including smallpox or influenza).

It is certainly understandable that some don't fully appreciate the benefit of vaccines because they are unaware of all that has occurred. Additionally, we are so prone to forget history, even when it is recent. However, it is far more difficult to understand how this benefit to our children can be refused or maligned with unfounded and disproven reports and myths. It has been said that vaccines have become victims of their own success, i.e. many don't realize how important vaccines are because they hardly ever see the diseases they prevent. Anyone who thinks that we don't need to vaccinate since these diseases have become less common doesn't understand how diseases spread and hasn't been paying attention. Pertussis ("Whooping Cough") has been increasing over the last few decades including a recent outbreak in California last year. We are currently on pace for the highest number of measles cases in 15 years. Similar trends have been experienced in Europe due to decreased utilization of vaccines. Vaccination is one history lesson that we are wise to remember and appreciate.

The science of medicine coupled with public policies in our country has given us and our children unparalleled health (and done so in a strikingly short period of time). So when you look at your children today and give thanks for their health, be thankful specifically for clean water and vaccines!

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Team Spotlight: Michelle Cash



Hometown: Mobile, AL

Favorite Vacation Memory: Going to Grandfather Mountain with my family every summer

Children: Caroline (13), Gaines (11), Laura Leigh (11), Claire (4)

Favorite Movie: Gone with the Wind and Top Gun

Pets: Dog named Buddy

Favorite Food: Sushi

Favorite Actress: Meryl Streep

Hobbies: reading, running, watching my kids play sports, doing anything with my family

Why she loves working at Middleton Pediatrics:

"I love working at Middleton Pediatrics because I love children. We have the most wonderful children and families. It also has an amazing staff. Dr. Middleton is a fabulous pediatrician. I admire his wisdom, philosophy of care and approach to patients and families."