WELCOME TO GWINNETT PEDIATRICS AND ADOLESCENT MEDICINE SPRING E-LETTER

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ITS ALL ABOUT "SAFETY"

Would your child know the steps to take if a stranger approached them? Would your child know the steps to take if someone they knew approached them? Does your child know who is a "safe" adult?

We really don't know what our children would do if faced with an unknown situation. We assume they know what to do if approached by a stranger, but what about the clerk at the grocery store?

"Stranger danger" — The media uses the phrase as a slogan to educate, however, the phrase "stranger" indicates that only a stranger can cause harm. The message of "never talk to strangers" does not fully educate children about how to stay safer. What does "stranger danger" really mean? Children should know how to recognize and avoid potentially dangerous situations and adults need to realize that there are risks from someone they know.

The Safe Side <u>http://www.thesafeside.com</u> motto is: "Smart. Cool. Safe". There are times when it's important to be smart (recognize danger), and other times when it's important to be cool (be cautious and think). Staying safe is the reward for knowing what to do and doing it. Parents need to teach their children to know the "safe" adult and be cautious around all others. Keeping your child's maturity level in mind, you want to equip them with the knowledge and strategies they will need to protect themselves in dangerous situations.

Again, stranger danger lessons should be ongoing – adapt the conversation as your child grows. He/she is likely to encounter different types of situations as they mature.

Tips for keeping kids safe: (from National Center for Missing & Exploited Children)

- Children need to be taught to remain close to an adult's side or within plain sight. No exceptions.
- Kids need to know not to open the door to their house or car without the "safe adult's" express permission. Even if a child knows a
 person, they must be taught that the adult directly responsible for them must first say okay.
- Practice scenarios with kids regularly and help kids to think about possible tricks or tactics.
- Teach kids to run away and scream from any person they feel threatened by. You would much rather have to explain your child's behavior to someone because they are reacting to possible stranger danger than the alternative.
- Kids should know that they are NEVER to go anywhere for any reason without the "safe" adult's express permission.

See the safety "links" (click Links page on our website) for suggestions and games or watch an interesting video. http://www.mommafindings.com/2012/02/have-you-done-enough-to-protect-your.html

Window Safety Week April 1- April 7

Screens keep bugs out, but they don't keep kids in. Here are some tips from SafeKids.org.

Install window guards to prevent children from falling out of windows. For windows above the first floor, install window guards with an emergency release device in case of fire.

Install window stops so that windows open no more than four inches.

Keep furniture away from windows so kids cannot climb to the ledge.

Do not rely on window screens to prevent falls.

Keep windows locked when they are closed.

April is National Kite Flying month – Go outside and fly a kite. For safety tips (http://www.nationalkitemonth.org/kids/safety.php)

Office News

Get your appointment reminders via Text Message -http://www.gwinnettpeds.com/news-topic.php?newsid=73 for instructions.

Schedule your summer check up before the "rush" in August. You can use our online form

Our Pediatricians support Strong4Life (<u>http://strong4life.com/getstarted/default.aspx</u>) which encourages healthy eating, exercise, and a lifestyle for a strong future. We will help parents with tips for encouraging good eating habits. We encourage a step wise approach with regard to decreasing screen time and promoting activity. Together we can help make our children productive, healthy, and happy adults.