



# Healthy Camp Update

## A Healthy Camp Begins and Ends at Home!

**A healthy camp really does start at home. Here are some things you can do to help your child have a great camp experience.**

1. If your child is showing signs of illness, keep them home and contact your camp director. This greatly reduces the spread of illness at camp and also helps assure that your child recovers. Know your camp's policy about illness and camp attendance.
2. Teach your child to sneeze/cough in his or her sleeve and to wash hands often while at camp. Speaking of their hands, teach them to keep their hands away from their face.
3. If your child has mental, emotional, or social health challenges, talk with a camp representative before camp starts. Proactively discussing a camp's ability to accommodate a child can help minimize — if not eliminate — potential problems.
4. Make sure your child has and wears appropriate closed-toe shoes for activities such as soccer and hiking and that your child understands that camp is likely a more rugged environment than what he or she experiences at home. Talk with your child about wearing appropriate shoes to avoid slips, trips, and falls that, in turn, can result in injuries such as a sprained ankle.
5. Send enough clothes so your child can dress in layers. Mornings can be chilly and afternoons can get quite hot. Dressing in layers allows your child to remove clothing as he or she warms while still enjoying camp.
6. Fatigue contributes to both injuries and illnesses. If your child is going to a day camp, be sure he or she gets enough rest at night. If the child will be at a resident camp, explain that camp is not like a sleepover; he or she needs to sleep, not stay up all night!
7. Remember to send sunscreen. Teach your child how to apply his or her sunscreen and how often to do so.
8. Send a reusable water bottle. Instruct your child to use it and refill it frequently during his or her camp stay. Staying hydrated is important to a healthy camp experience.
9. Talk with your child about telling his or her counselor or camp director about problems or things that bother them at camp. The camp professionals will coach your child in managing feelings associated with missing home and coping with situations such as losing something special. But camp staff can't be helpful if they don't know about the problem — so make sure your child knows he or she can talk about it.
10. Should something come up during the camp experience or afterward — you see an unusual rash on your child or the child shares an upsetting story — contact the camp's representative and let him or her know. Camps want to partner effectively with parents; sharing information makes this possible.

### Want to learn more?

- Visit the American Camp Association's® (ACA) parent-dedicated Web site, [www.CampParents.org](http://www.CampParents.org), which provides a wide range of educational resources to help parents as they coach children to adjust to the world of camp.
- Find resources in the ACA Bookstore ([www.ACAbookstore.org](http://www.ACAbookstore.org)), such as *Off to Camp*, by Myra Pravda, RN, MSN, and *The Summer Camp Handbook*, by Christopher Thurber, PhD, ABPP.

**Building a partnership between you and your child's camp staff is essential; it's one way to make sure your child has the best camp experience possible!**



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