

Spring Into Safety

Winter can be hard in Newfoundland. The heavy ice and snow can damage more than our grass and gardens. Summer gear can get damaged while lying under all that snow, skates or shovels.

Use this 15-minute checklist to check out your families' readiness for five different spring and summer activities.

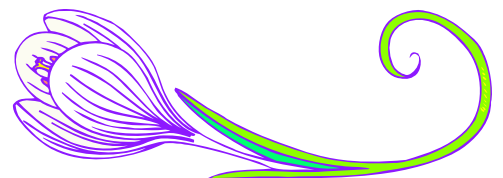
Whether you are a parent, grandparent, babysitter or caregiver, a little Preparation can make the difference between an Adventure or a Catastrophe!

Before Climbing that Jungle Gym:

- ❑ Check the ground for broken glass or sharp metal or plastic objects. A bug jar left in the sandbox over winter can be crushed by the heavy snow and ice. A good raking may bring dangerous objects to the surface.
- ❑ Check that the playground still has a deep, soft surface of woodchips, sand, pea gravel or rubber material. Add more if the surface has become packed down and hard.
- ❑ Check over outside equipment that has sat outside all winter for broken boards, loose or protruding nails and wobbly bits.
- ❑ Make sure any plastic slides or rungs did not crack in the cold.
- ❑ Remove all drawstrings from your children's' clothes. Don't use a long scarf or mittens with strings on cool spring days.
- ❑ Restock your First Aid Kit: A good list is at <http://www.redcross.ca/article.asp?id=380&tid=025>
- ❑ Are you prepared for an emergency situation? E.g. A choking adult, a cut knee or a broken bone. If not, enroll in a First Aid course now.

Before Swimming and Boating:

- ❑ Does everyone's PFD (personal floatation device, aka "lifejacket") still fit?
- ❑ Remember your child shouldn't "grow into" a large PFD; he/she could slip out of one that is too big.
- ❑ Is the PFD in good shape? Zippers zipping, all ties attached and latches working?
- ❑ Do you and your child know how to swim? No or not very well? Enroll in swimming lessons now.
- ❑ Are all your paddles present and with your boat?
- ❑ Is your emergency boating kit with the boat and still intact?
- ❑ Take time to review Water and Boating Safety rules with everyone. Find them at: www.safetyishogame.gc.ca
- ❑ IF you have a home swimming pool:
 - Is the fence around it at least 4 feet tall and have a childproof gate?
 - Was the fence damaged by the winter?
 - Has the pool safety equipment survived the winter intact?
 - Is the throwing assist rope sturdy and robust?



Before Heading into the Yard:

- ❑ Before mowing for the first time, check the ground for broken glass, rocks or sharp metal or plastic objects. A good raking will bring dangerous objects to the surface and decrease the risk of the lawnmower catching them and shooting them out at high speed.
- ❑ Clean up animal feces in gardens, grassy areas and sandboxes.
- ❑ Replace the sand in the sandbox if cat poop is present and make or buy a cover for the sandbox. Use it always.
- ❑ Throw away any toys, planters, and baskets that have been damaged by the cold and ice.
- ❑ Check for loose or broken boards, loose or protruding nails/screws, or wobbly supports in your fence or deck.
- ❑ Make sure your steps have strong, secure handrails on and off your deck and front steps.
- ❑ Repair any large cracks or heaves in the concrete walkways that will cause a fall.

Before Biking, Skateboarding and Scootering down the Street:

- ❑ Does your child's and your helmet still fit? The chinstrap should be snug and the helmet should not move when you shake your head.
- ❑ Are the helmet, elbow and kneepads intact and in good shape? Remember to replace ones that are lost, cracked or eaten by the dog.
- ❑ Is the bike, skateboard or scooter in good working order with no missing or damaged parts?
- ❑ Do the brakes still work? Is the chain tight? Are the tires properly inflated?

Before Heading Out to the Neighborhood:

- ❑ Have your 9 year old show you that she knows how to cross the streets safely. Take a walk with her and let her be "in charge" of picking the crossing areas and time to cross.
- ❑ Children under 9 can't judge car speeds or distance; they will still need an adult or responsible older child with them.
- ❑ Help your child plan the safest route to their new friends' house, crossing at intersections and checking both ways before crossing the road. Reinforce her safe decisions and stop the risky ones.
- ❑ Teach your child safe walking habits: walking facing the traffic, watch out for driveways, wear visible clothing, make sure drivers see you and can stop before you step out into the road.

These spring safety tips have been brought to you by injury prevention volunteers at:

Canadian Red Cross www.redcross.ca
Kids in Safe Seats www.kidsinsafeseats.ca
Seniors Resource Centre NL www.seniorsresource.ca
Wellness Coalition- Avalon East www.wellnesscoalition-avaloneast.ca

For other great injury prevention ideas, check out:

www.safekidscanada.ca and
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/

