

Chatting with The Good Dr. Laura Shook  
August 2009

Our tomatoes are ripening and the basil wants to bloom. The eggplant and peppers are thriving and I think the bugs are going to share with us a few heads of cabbage. Life is good in the garden and better in the house now that we've added bamboo blinds, to shade the east and west sides of our house, blocking the sun before it reaches the windows. It's hard to believe that it's already August and school will be starting soon. Here are a few things I would like us all to remember.

Cars, be on the look out for children they could pop out from just about anywhere. Children, look both ways before crossing the street. The cars may not see you, assume they do not see you. The laws of physics are powerful and momentum will prevail. If it comes down to kid vs car everyone loses.

Keep your hands clean and teach your young ones to wash their own hands. The start of the school year is one of the greatest social networking events for the flu and cold germ community.

When it comes to book bags, backpacks and growing bones, the load being carried should weigh no more than 10% of a child's body weight and never exceed 20%. That means that the backpack of an 80 pound child should not weigh more than 8 pounds and never exceed 16 pounds. Get out the scale and weigh your kid's bag.

It is hot out and it could get hotter. Make sure you and your kids are drinking water and staying hydrated especially if you or they are involved in outdoor sports or work. Learn to identify the signs of heat exhaustion (heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea or vomiting) and heat stroke (initial profuse sweating then hot dry red skin, fever, vomiting, confusion, seizures and unconsciousness). For heat exhaustion get out of the heat, drink cool non-alcoholic beverages, take a cool shower and rest in an air-conditioned environment. For heat stroke, seek emergency medical help and get out of the heat.

Eat breakfast, please eat breakfast, there is nothing quite so disturbing as seeing children and teenagers munching chips and drinking diet pop for "breakfast". Just because it is edible does not mean it is food. A quick minimally processed breakfast might be a peanut butter and jelly sandwich on whole grain bread, hard boiled eggs or an apple with cheese or peanut butter. Try making whole grain muffins with nuts, raisins and cranberries, add some powdered milk and oat bran to the dry ingredients for an added boost of protein and fiber. Even leftover spaghetti is a better breakfast than donuts and 22 oz of pop. To summarize (ha ha pun intended) stay cool, be alert, eat well, stay healthy, deal with your baggage and take care.

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