

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple A Day, Lake Region Healthcare's health and wellness segment where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier life. I'm Katie Johnson, your host, and my guest today is Amy Fisher. She's a pediatric nurse practitioner in the pediatrics department at Lake Region Healthcare's Clinic Services and she is here to talk with us kind of all things kids and summer and maybe even a little back to school as much as we hate it's time for that. Good morning, Amy.

Amy Fisher: Good morning.

Katie Johnson: Thanks for joining me today. We're already halfway through summer and I know we have frowny faces about that. Our kids have had just enough time to kind of get out of their school routines and into summer routine and yet we see the back to school stuff out on the shelves and know that that's not too far away either. As we spend time with our kids and our grandkids and our neighbors or nieces or nephews and really try to make the most out of summer, what are some pieces of advice you have for both being safe and for taking advantage of what summer has to offer in terms of different kinds of learning outside of book learning.

Amy Fisher: I would really encourage them to get out and just experience life and life experiences such as going out for walks or reading or doing activities with the library that are actively involved rather than down necessarily with paper and pen but learning through experiences. As far as safety goes, making sure they're wearing life jackets and are well supervised anywhere near water. They're applying their sunscreen and reapplying it without forgetting to reapply it because that's very easy to do for all of us. Also, insect repellents are going to be very important now that the mosquitoes have just come out in droves.

Katie Johnson: Haven't they been awful?

Amy Fisher: Oh, just overnight, they've just come out so make sure that they have the long sleeve shirts and pants to help protect them as well as well as the insect repellent with the deet. Again, being well supervised whether they're on their bikes and making sure they're wearing their bike helmets because there's more than just getting hit by a car on a bike. It's hitting a hole and tipping your bike hitting your head. It can happen anywhere. So even on my driveway, it's not necessarily safe because I might hit a hole or maybe just accidentally tip over. We don't know when that's going to happen because that's why they're accidents.

Katie Johnson: Exactly.

Amy Fisher: So we just want to help protect them and make sure they have a happy, safe, fun summer.

Katie Johnson: Exactly. We live in such a great area for that. I mean, there's absolutely no excuse to not be outside taking advantage of trails, for lakes, for libraries, for theater, for

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all those kinds of experiences you mentioned.

Amy Fisher: Yeah, and they can do things that are educational while they're getting exercise. The walk of flags, that's a wonderful amazing thing we have in our community that we always need to take advantage of and learn from so they can learn about why we have freedom here and maybe they want to volunteer to help with something like that. So there's a lot of activities that they could do anywhere.

Katie Johnson: Those are great tips for enjoying what's left of summer but like we said, back to school really isn't that far away. So time to think about things like are my kids up to date on their immunizations, does my child need a sports physical, some of those kinds of things. What are parents needing to think about as they think about preparing for back to school?

Amy Fisher: I would try to schedule the sports physicals, the school physicals, the kindergarten physicals, the immunizations as soon as possible so that everybody isn't trying to do that all at one time and that way, you get the day and time that works for you and discussing more than just that at the visits is going to be important. If you have a list of things that are of concern, there's something primary of concern, often it's helpful to write those one or two or three things down so that when you leave, you know that those questions were addressed and so that that visit is focused on what your needs are as a family.

Katie Johnson: Definitely. You've made a really good point. We don't everyone trying to get in the last two weeks of August or the week right before sports practice starts because that just causes a lot of undue stress for everyone.

Amy Fisher: Yeah, it certainly does. We want to make sure that everyone's needs are getting met.

Katie Johnson: When we think about back to school too, I mentioned routines at the beginning of the interview, bedtime routines, getting ready routines, those kinds of things, do you have any tips for making that process a little bit smoother as we get ready for that first morning of getting back up and back on the school schedule?

Amy Fisher: It's sometimes very difficult to get kids to go to bed earlier as summer progresses because it is still light out and they don't want to go to bed when it's light out. But if you can slowly transition back to more of the bedtime more than the night before school starts. It's usually very beneficial. Some other things I would recommend is they don't have to take naps necessarily during the day. We want them outside active and at least an hour or more a day to get that physical activity but if they're going to have any downtime, maybe if they would sit and read a little bit or do things like that to encourage those academic achievements as well as also important ... Because if they're just going to be sitting inside resting, maybe it's raining outside, reading would be a lot better than playing a video game or sitting and watching TV or social media, necessarily.

Katie Johnson: Definitely. We talk about the physical health of our kids a lot, making sure they

have their immunizations and their well child checkups. I'm curious about how you address the mental health of kids today. That seems to be more and more prominent in people's minds and I think rightfully so.

Amy Fisher: Yeah, I think we're addressing the issues with mental health in a very healthy manner. But also there's a lot of pressures on children with social media and never getting that downtime or if there's bullying, if it's cyber bullying, making sure you keep those lines of communication open with your children, watching for signs of sadness or anxiety or anxiousness are really important and to try to get them to talk to you about it and getting them help if they needed. I think it's awesome when kids and parents can identify that there's an issue and they're going to get help because I try to tell kids, "That's your first step in showing how mature you are and that you make good choices is when you ask for help when you need it."

Katie Johnson: You mentioned for looking for signs of sadness or anxiety. Do you have some kind of things to watch for?

Amy Fisher: Yeah, when you're looking for depression, maybe they're having a difficult time getting out of bed or they want to sleep a lot or they're isolating themselves or even saying things that are very worrisome that they could injure themselves or someone else if they're feeling that life has no purpose or what's the point of my being here. Those are not just words that they use. If they're using words like that, we need to act on it and make sure that they're getting the help that they need.

Katie Johnson: Great advice both for summer time, enjoyment, for back to school preparedness and for the overall health of our kids and our community that we're fortunate to live in a community that really does care about its kids so much and fortunate to have people like you and the other pediatricians here at Lake Region Healthcare who are so committed to the health of our children. As we mentioned, now is the time to call and schedule to get your child in for physicals, for back to school kindergarten checks, sports physicals, well child checks in general to make sure they're healthy and ready for school and we're taking appointments at the clinic for those needs now. Don't wait until the end of August. So call 739-2221 and that's one main appointment line for any of the family practice or pediatricians at Lake Region Healthcare. Amy, any other last thoughts you want to share with our listeners this morning?

Amy Fisher: I just say enjoy every day.

Katie Johnson: Yeah, good advice.

Amy Fisher: Kids grow up way too fast. Enjoy them. Encourage them to enjoy their summers and live a healthy, happy, safe life.

Katie Johnson: That is our goal for sure and certainly what we wish for all kids and their families who are listening today. Amy Fisher, pediatric nurse practitioner at Lake Region Healthcare. My guest today on Apple a Day as we talk about summer and kids and the thought of back to school all in one program. Amy Fisher and Katie Johnson on

Apple a Day reminding you that there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it.
Have a great day.