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## AAP News Parent Plus

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

### Tips to keep your family safe during a lightning storm

Playing in a rainstorm seems like the perfect way to cool off on a hot summer day. But if lightning is in the sky, take cover quickly.

About 400 people in the United States are struck by lightning each year, and about 55 are killed, according to the National Weather Service. Data from 2005 show that 15% of those who die are struck while playing an organized sport.

One way to keep your family safe is to designate a weather-watcher who will keep a close eye on the forecast each day, especially between late afternoon and early evening when the threat of lightning is the greatest. You also should have a family safety plan that includes identifying a safe space and what to do (and not do) during a storm.

Here are some tips from the National Weather Service to build your family's plan:

- Find a safe space that is fully enclosed, like a room in a building or a car. Picnic areas, dugouts and bus stops are not good because they have open sides. If you are in a car, don't touch the radio dial or the door handles — especially if they are metal.
- If you are in an open field and can't find cover, stick to low-lying ground around the shortest trees possible. Then crouch down on the balls of your feet, put your head down and your hands on your knees. Get as low to the ground as possible without lying down.
- Stay away from open windows, sinks, toilets, tubs, showers and electrical outlets. During a lightning storm, electric currents can run through these objects and "jump" onto a person.
- Use cordless phones or cell phones. Phones with cords are not safe.
- Follow the 30/30 rule. Make sure you are in a safe space if the time between the sound of thunder and the sight of lightning is 30 seconds or less. Wait for 30 minutes after the last instance of thunder or lightning before going outside.

— Shayna Starr



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