

Bump kids' summer activities into high gear

Summer is right around the corner and now is the time to get the kids outside and moving. But how much are your kids really getting out of their play time?

According to experts at Nationwide Children's Hospital, it depends. Generally speaking, any activity is better than no activity, but parents and kids can make small modifications to get the most out of summertime activities.

Warmer weather brings one of our favorite summer activities — swimming! Swimming can be a great cardiovascular workout, but just bobbing about in the water isn't going to get kids' heart rates up. Water activities are lower impact than those that are land-based, but water also creates resistance which helps get the heart pumping if you move fast enough. If you have a pool at home, consider installing a pool basketball hoop, encourage games of Marco Polo and make up fun relay races.

For kids, bike riding is a major means of transportation to and from friends' houses. Although pedaling gets the body moving, it doesn't necessarily mean kids are getting a good workout. To burn more calories while bike riding, up the



intensity by riding faster, farther, and up hills. If the bike has gears, try riding in a lower gear, which will make pedaling more challenging. Always remember to wear helmets and safety gear.

If your kids are always on the go, take a look at their footwear. In recent years, wheeled tennis shoes like the name-brand Heelys have grown in popularity among kids and preteens. While they're fun to use, wheeled tennis shoes burn fewer calories walking the same distance. Using this fun footwear requires the

same safety precautions as rollerblading and skateboarding, yet many kids don't wear the recommended safety equipment like helmets, knee pads and elbow pads.

With summertime activities, it's most important to find one that your child enjoys, and one that also promotes a healthy lifestyle. Find ways to create opportunities for your child to try new activities and spend time outdoors. Measure your child's level of exertion by how hard he or she is breathing and, especially in the hot summer months, be sure children drink plenty of water to keep hydrated.

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How many calories can you burn by doing your favorite activities? Sleeping for 30 minutes will burn a cup of carrots. Check out the energy balance handout on ColumbusParent.com!



Nutritional experts from **Nationwide Children's Hospital** provided the information for this column.