



Adventist Risk Management, Inc.



A Healthy Kid, A Happy Camper

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"Dear Mom and Dad,

It's the last week of camp and I'm so sad! I can't believe it's over already!

During lunch yesterday, we got to make our own sandwiches. It was so cool! I made Rex my favorite sandwich, peanut butter and jelly. But after he took a bite, his face puffed up and that's when I found out he's allergic to peanut butter?! Who knew you could be allergic to peanut butter?!

Well, I'll see you guys soon! Camp has been great, but I'm ready to go home.

Love, Tommy"

Camp activities are inherently risky. The success with which the activities are carried out depends on thorough pre-planning on the part of camp management and cooperation of campers and their families.

Maintaining a camp health care facility that meets standard requirements is of particular importance. Having the appropriate medical information on file for each camper and ensuring the staff is educated on the unique needs of the campers is crucial for addressing potentially life-threatening situations.

Make sure you have enough medical staff in proportion to the number of campers and staff. Are you equipping your camp medical team with everything needed for a safe and successful camp stay for each child? Here are some of the documents that should accompany any camper:

- General Liability Waiver
- Pick-Up Authorization/Emergency Contact and Release forms
- Health history form and health exam certifications/records
- Authorization for Medication and Medication Administration Instructions
- Medical Insurance Information
- HIPPA Release Form

Parents or guardians of campers with medical needs must fill out the appropriate forms during the registration process. On the HIPPA Release Form, be sure to specify the time frame in which camp medical staff will have access to the child's health information. They should also provide prescription medications in original containers with clear instructions for administration. These steps will be of great use to the

camp nurse for the duration of each camper's stay.

Preparing Your Counselors and Staff

The medical staff should review the health records of each camper. These should include:

- a description of past medical history
- allergies or dietary restrictions
- immunizations
- current medications
- physical, mental or psychological conditions that require special attention while at camp.

Be sure to remind your camp staff to keep campers medical and allergy information confidential.

Administer routine medications and treatments as needed. Drugs that must be with a camper at all times, such as an EpiPen or inhaler, should be assigned to the staff member in charge of supervising the child on a daily basis. If the camper changes groups or transfers into another activity overseen by another staff member, the medication needs to be turned over to the supervising camp staff member.

Before camp starts, each staff member should have current CPR and First Aid certifications. Train all staff on emergency procedures, including lost camper protocols and identification and reporting of suspected abuse. During staff training, conduct emergency drills to ensure that the staff is familiar with the protocols necessary in the event of an emergency. Extend training to your campers by alerting them to potential hazards in the camp and familiarizing them with the First Aid area and/or the Camp Nurse's office.

Several additional suggestions to help you maintain a safe camp environment are:

- Know which campers are on medication at camp and be alert to changes in behavior or other physical indicators.
- Be aware of the dangers of over-exposure to the sun.
- Closely monitor skills and general physical conditions of the campers during their participation in an activity to avoid over-exhaustion.

In the Cafeteria

Food allergies can pose a life-threatening risk to campers. Establish prevention protocols within the camp and ensure that all who will be in contact with the campers know of all specific allergies, how to recognize the symptoms of an allergic reaction and what to do if a reaction occurs. Some suggested protocols from the Food Allergy Research & Education group include:

- Inform all affected personnel of the allergies of the campers – lifeguards, transportation drivers, dining hall/cafeteria workers, camp nurses, counselors, volunteers, and anyone else who may offer food or plan parties or events.
- Check the expiration date of all medications. Replace any expired or unsealed, previously used medication. Ensure the proper storage of drugs and that supplies are adequate.
- Educate campers and staff on strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods, recognizing symptoms of allergic reactions, how to read food labels, how to use epinephrine, and how and when to tell an adult about a possible allergic response.
- Inform campers and staff of the available emergency care.
- Discuss meal plans with parents/camper and alternative plans if necessary.
- Ensure that the nurse has the required authorizations and appropriate medications to use in the event of unintentional contact with an allergen.
- Be certain any emergency medications and authorizations accompany the camper and a designated camp staff member.

These protocols call for the involvement of the camp staff, the camper's family, and the campers themselves, too. It's important for everyone to be on the same page so that in the event of an emergency, each person involved will know what to do.

Be Safe and Have a Blast

The highest priority of a camp program is to ensure the safety of the campers and staff. With thorough pre-planning on the part of the camp management, appropriate training and education for all staff members, and informing the campers on the safety rules you can be sure to provide a safe and enjoyable camp experience to remember.

Miss out on the rest of the Summer Camp Series? You can check them out right now:

- [Part 1: Facilities Inspection and Safety](#)
- [Part 2: Camp Activity Safety Tips](#)

- [Part 3: Aquatic Activity Safety Tips](#)

References

¹<http://www.acacamps.org/press-room/aca-facts-trends>

²<http://www.acacamps.org/campers-families/planning-camp/preparing-camp/how-choose-camp-safety-tips>

³<http://www.sportrisk.com/2011/04/summer-camps-checklist/>

⁴<http://www.alpinecamp.com/jobs/responsibilities.php>

⁵http://www.headfirstcamps.com/general_info/allergy_medical_info.asp

⁶http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/560630_4

⁷<http://www.foodallergy.org/managing-food-allergies/at-camp#camp>

⁸<http://montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/resources/files/how/SummerProgramStaffManual.pdf>

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