

# Kid's Camp From My Doctor's Perspective

By: Kjartan D. Armann, M.D.

I remember how excited my brother and I were when it came time for summer camp at Camp Campbell, in the Santa Cruz Mountains. I think we packed our suitcases a week early and repacked several times before we left.



Any camp experience is exciting for our children, whether it be day camp, overnight camp or any of the other camp opportunities that we have available here in our area.

There are camps for almost any age and interest. Choosing the right camp is the trick. Day camps are great for the young camper. They get to be with their friends during the day and with family at night. This is, also, a great way to build up to overnight camps for when they are older. Overnight camps are a lot of fun and excitement for the tweens and teens. The age to start overnight camps really depends on the individual child and family. The child needs a certain level of maturity and independence, while the parents have to be comfortable letting their child be away from home overnight for days or a week. This may be harder than you think. These overnight camps give our young children the ability to gain independence and a sense of confidence that will help them be more sure of themselves, as they grow up.

The camper is most often very excited about the events of camp and is eager to share his or her experiences with the family. Day campers tell the family about their great excursions at dinner time, while the away camper will have stories to tell over several days. By having a family who listens and asks about the camp, our camper will have a more enriching experience. This will, also, give the camper the desire to go to other camps in the future.

By far the most negative feeling many campers have is being "homesick". What can we do to



decrease this difficult feeling? First our camper has to be ready and prepared for away overnight camp. Kids still get homesick, even when they are prepared, so let's help decrease the pain by taking a few preemptive steps.

Get the mailing address of the camp. Make sure the camper can receive mail while at camp, and start writing letters to them the day before they leave. Make the letters light and happy! Send a family photograph with the camper, to camp. It's always nice to get homemade cookies!

Most camps discourage telephone or electronic communication for many reasons, mostly so the camper is focused on the experience of camp and not the family back home.



Medications and permission forms: Most all of the camps will require the parents to fill out a medication form for any medications you want your child to get, including over the counter medication such as Tylenol. The last few years most camps have required a medication form be signed by your child's pediatrician, which has the names of the medications, doses, time interval for dosing, and adverse reactions to the listed medications. Please get the medical forms to your pediatrician as soon as possible, so there is no delay getting the forms turned in on time.

Most of all make summer camp an enjoyable, fun experience. Your child will have memories that will last a life time.



Dr. Armann is a pediatrician practicing in Santa Clara Valley for over 25 years. His passion is the care and promoting lifelong health for every child. He is a San Jose native; graduated from Los Gatos High and took his residency at UCSF. You can reach Dr. Armann through email at [kjkidmd@gmail.com](mailto:kjkidmd@gmail.com) or call the office at 408- 356-0578.

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