

Summertime and the Living Is Easy – If You Play it Safe!

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Before heading off on vacation or for a few weeks of summer fun, take heed and mind these tips so that you can have a fun and safe time.



Slip, Slap, Slop Before Going in the Sun

It's the season for fun in the sun but protecting your skin from the damages that can come from too much sun is of the utmost importance. According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. One in five Americans will develop skin cancer in the course of a lifetime and approximately 1 million new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed per year. The good news is you **can** reduce your risk of developing this potentially disfiguring and lethal cancer and enjoy the sun by regularly practicing these common sense strategies from The American Cancer Society (ACS) and Centers for Disease Control:

- Seek shade and stay out of the direct sun especially during the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
- Apply a sunscreen at least 30 minutes before sun exposure with an SPF of 15 and higher that blocks both UVA and UVB rays. Remember to reapply it according to the manufacturer's directions at least every two hours, after getting wet, sweating a lot, or toweling off.
- Wear protective clothing, usually darker colors or heavier weave clothing. If you are not able to do this due to the heat, cover as much of your body as possible and use suntan lotion wisely on all exposed parts of your body.
- Wear wraparound sun glasses that provide 100 percent UV protection
- Avoid tanning beds and tanning salons which are a source of ultraviolet light exposure.
- Go to the Skin Cancer Foundation to get more information on proper sunscreen use: <http://www.skincancer.org/sunscreen/sunscreens-explained.html>

Leaves of Three--Don't Touch Me!

Remember that adage from scout camp? Before trekking through mountain and stream, pay attention to your surroundings and prevent exposure to irritating plants. The National Institute of Health reports that poison ivy is the most frequent cause of skin rash for children and adults who spend time outdoors. It grows in all parts of the United States and has three shiny leaves and a red stem. It often grows as a vine especially along river banks.

There are many myths that surround the contagiousness of poison ivy as well as the cure. Poison ivy is not contagious. The red, itchy and blistering rash is caused when skin brushes up along the irritating resin sap (urushiol) that is on the leaves of the plant. The resin enters the skin and causes the rash. The rash is not caused by the oozing blisters and once the resin is washed off the skin there is no way to transfer the rash. However, often times a person does not know that they have been contaminated with the resin on their clothes or tools so they continue to rub the resin onto other areas of their skin. The itchy blisters then erupt at different times giving the impression that the rash is spreading.

Once it happens, the poison ivy rash needs to run its course. However, there are many over the counter remedies that can help to alleviate the itchiness such as oatmeal baths, cooling lotions

and topical steroid creams. It is important to seek medical attention if the rash is extensive and severe or if the blisters are on the face, especially near the eye.

Get more detailed information at:

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/print/poisonivyoakandsumac.html>

Don't Get Bugged About It!

Camping or hiking trips can bring us closer to nature and help us appreciate the beauty of the great outdoors. However, we need to be aware that we are now intruding on another species' turf, so it is important to pay close attention not to get too up close and personal, which can lead to unfortunate results.

Spiders

Black widow, spiders and brown recluse spiders are two spiders found in our local area that can produce mild to severe and life threatening reactions. Pay close attentions to your surroundings if camping out or in a cabin. Black widows tend to like to build high webs (skyscraper) where as the brown recluse spider likes to, well, be reclusive. They can steal away into the toes of shoes or other cave like spaces. Be sure to shake out clothing and sleeping bags.

Here's what to look for:

http://www.emedicinehealth.com/slideshow_black_widow_brown_recluse_spiders/article_em.htm

Ticks and More Insects

Get some safety advice on biting insects and ticks from the U.S. Forest Service:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/boone/safety/health/insects.shtml>

Snakes

The best way to avoid a poisonous snake is to know what it looks like. Take a peak at these:

<http://www.trailquest.net/SNpoi.html>

Keep a Cool Head

With the high heat and humidity it is important to be aware of the early warning signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat stroke is a life threatening event but both conditions warrant immediate action. Learn the difference and how to how prevent and take action if it occurs it:

<http://www.emedicinehealth.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=59290&pf=3&page=1>

Keeping hydrated at all times in warm weather is the key to avoiding serious dehydration or heat issues. A good rule of thumb is as the mercury rises drink at least an eight to ten ounce glass of water for every 10 degrees of temperature, (as in 8 glasses for 80 degrees etc.) and more if you are exercising, working outdoors, or sweating a lot.

Fire Up That Grill

Although gas grills are used 1.5 times more often then charcoal grills they were involved in 5 times more fires. So have those barbecues but keep safe by following these tips from the National Fire Protection Association:

<http://www.nfpa.org/categoryList.asp?categoryID=298&URL=Safety%20Information/For%20consumers/Seasonal%20safety/Grilling>

So kick back and have fun as you make memories this summer. Just remember, always put safety first!

More Resources

Family Education

<http://life.familyeducation.com/summer/safety/33585.html>

Ten Ways to Keep Safe This Summer

<http://www.msdh.state.ms.us/msdhsite/handlers/printcontent.cfm?ContentID=2616&ThisPageURL=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Emsdh%2Estate%2Ems%2Eus%2Fmsdhsite%2Findex%2Ecfm%2F43%2C2616%2C98%2C261%2Chtml&EntryCode=6302&GroupID=43>

Ideas for a Healthier Summer

<http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/presskits/summer.htm>

More Tips from the National Fire Protection

<http://www.nfpa.org/itemDetail.asp?categoryID=300&itemID=19033&URL=Safety%20Information/For%20consumers/Seasonal%20safety/&cookie%5Ftest=1>