

Summer Safety



Summer is a time for fun and many different outdoor activities—and here are some tips to stay safe while you are enjoying the warm weather and longer days.

Swimming and Boating

Hot weather means spending time near cool and refreshing water, but remember to wear life jackets, use age-appropriate floating toys, know the waters, and keep an eye on those who can't swim (or are not strong swimmers). Drowning is the leading cause of death among preventable injuries; in kids ages 1-4, it happens in swimming pools, and 5-17 year olds are more likely to drown in open or natural water (lakes, rivers, the ocean).

Heatstroke and Heat Exhaustion

Children and pets can suffer from heatstroke or die once the temperature in your car reaches 104° F—which can happen in as little as an hour or two, even in the shade. Cracking a window does not help! Never leave kids or pets unattended in a vehicle on a hot day. Heat exhaustion occurs when you overwork yourself on a hot day (symptoms include heavy sweating, faintness, dizziness, fatigue, nausea, cramping, and headache) and can lead to heatstroke. Drink plenty of water or sports drinks and take regular breaks in a cooler spot—and if it's especially hot out, reconsider any non-essential strenuous activities. Seek immediate medical attention for these symptoms: confusion, agitation, loss of consciousness, or inability to drink anything.

Protect Yourself from the Sun

You may not always be able to see or feel sun damage, but it's there. Choose a sunscreen labeled SPF 30 and apply at least 15-20 minutes before going outside or in water—this allows it to soak into the skin and form its protective barrier. Use

a lip balm with SPF as well, and don't forget to re-apply every 2 hours (sooner if you're swimming or sweating a lot). Also, use other physical barriers like hats, sunglasses, clothing, and shade to further protect yourself.

Fireworks and Fire Safety

Now's a great time of year to enjoy sparklers, fireworks, cookouts, campfires, or bonfires—while they're very pretty and fun, they also can be dangerous when you're not careful. For kids under 7, consider buying light sticks, fiber-optic wands, party poppers, or bubbles instead of sparklers. Have at least one sober adult in charge of monitoring safety and keep a hose, bucket of sand, or fire extinguisher nearby to manage errant fires. Take extra precautions on very dry days, and also keep first aid kits handy in case of burns.

Food Safety

Hot weather makes food spoil faster, leading to more cases of food poisoning in the summer months. Refrigerate perishable foods within an hour if it's over 90° F, and avoid cross-contamination of raw meat and foods you plan to eat raw. Use clean plates for cooked foods, and make sure meat is cooked properly. Outdoors, keep food and drinks covered to protect them from flies and wasps—especially sweet things and canned or bottled drinks!

Ticks and Mosquitos

Keep yourself (and your kids or pets) safe from these disease-carrying critters by using products like Repel, OFF! or Cutter. Check to make sure that there are no ticks hanging on after a walk in tall grass or the woods, and if you do find

one, remove it promptly. Use tweezers as close to the skin as possible. Pull it straight out, then clean the skin with soap and water or rubbing alcohol, and dispose of the tick in alcohol, wrapping in tape, or placing in a sealed bag. See a doctor if you develop a rash or fever near the bite.

Playground Safety

Whether it's made of metal or plastic, playground equipment heats up in the summer sun, especially between 10am-3pm. Check the temperature before tots touch! You should also make sure your kids have enough sunblock and water, and that shoelaces are tied and loose clothing is tucked in. Additionally, keep an eye out for bees and wasps; sometimes they nest under equipment or in shrubs. Nothing ruins the fun faster than an avoidable injury! And of course, always stay where you can see and hear your children, no matter how old they are. This allows you to react quickly to an emergency.

Safe Travels

If you plan to take a road trip or fly to some exotic locale for the summer, keep safety in mind! If you are traveling with children, make sure you have the appropriate carseat or booster seat for their age and size. Bring along any necessary vaccination cards and medications, and pack a first aid kit and a road safety kit. If you are traveling alone, stick to well-lighted and populated areas; if you are traveling as a family, have ways of staying in touch with one another and a plan if someone is separated from the group.

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