

Of Interest

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Affiliated Employee Assistance Program

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Summer Time and The Living Is Easy

by Liz Ashe

Summer is a time for vacations, travel, picnics, barbecues, beaches, water sports and some well-earned rest and relaxation, but every year we hear of boating accidents, drownings, sunstroke and burns, and food poisoning. The following safety tips can help you sidestep many of the potential hazards.

PICNICKING

Keep perishable food in a cold, well-insulated cooler and leave room for air to circulate freely within the ice chest. Put food back in the cooler as soon as you finish eating. Note chicken and mayonnaise and are very susceptible to bacterial growth in hot temperatures. Don't store cooler in the trunk. It gets hotter than the back seat of a car.

BARBECUING

- Use different plates and utensils for raw and cooked meat. Bacteria, killed by heat, can be on the utensils after preparation and then added to the cooked food.
- Wash hands thoroughly after handling raw meat.
- Use a meat thermometer to insure that foods are cooked (160 degrees for hamburgers, 160 for pork, 165 for chicken.) If you don't have one, make sure all the pink is gone from meats, there is no red in the poultry joints and that fish flakes easily with a fork.
- Use proper methods to start the fire and read directions on the grill and be careful of sparks.

CAMPING

- Use bottled water for drinking and cooking. Avoid using water from lakes and streams without boiling it for 15 minutes or use purification tablets.
- Protect yourself against ticks. They can transmit infectious disease such as Lyme Disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Encephalitis. Use an insect repellent that is effective against ticks and spray it on your clothing as well as your skin. Long pants & sleeves, shoes and socks help deter ticks. After you've been outdoors check behind your ears and knees to ensure no ticks adhere to your skin.
- Wear dry clothing to bed. Clothes worn during the day may have absorbed perspiration that will condense in colder night temperatures and cause a chill.

BOATING

- Safety starts with staying sober.
- Use U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation devices or life jackets.
- Be alert to weather conditions before you start and keep alert to sudden storms moving in. When the waves start to get bigger, conditions are changing.

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FUN IN THE SUN

- Wear loose clothing so body heat can escape.
- Avoid strenuous exercise when it is extremely hot and humid.
- Drink plenty of cool fluids to cool your body. Thirst is not a good indicator of how much fluid your body needs. If you are exercising and perspiring (losing fluids), increase your intake to 1/2 cup of water every fifteen minutes.
- Limit soft drinks and juices with greater than 10% sugar. Slower to leave the stomach, they may cause cramps, stomach upset and diarrhea.
- Use sunscreen even on cloudy days. Dermatologists recommend a sunscreen with at least a block of SPF 15. On a cloudy day, 80% of the sun's ultraviolet rays still pass through the clouds. Don't forget the feet and ankles. The sun is more intense near the water because water reflects the light and you can burn in the water. Snorkeling, unprotected on the surface of the water, is a sure bet for a painful burn.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or visor to protect your face and sunglasses to protect your eyes.
- Certain medications increase sensitivity to the sun. Check the labels or consult your pharmacist or doctor.
- Take frequent "sun" breaks in the shade to cool off.

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- Carry Coast Guard approved distress devices.
- Allow one third of your fuel to reach your destination and one third to return. Know where refueling stations are located.
- Tell someone where you plan to be boating, how long you plan to be there, and what the boat looks like (include registration number).
- Know and practice the “rules of the waterways” and know the waterway. Get a navigation chart that shows the depths, submerged hazards etc.,
- Watch other vehicles for signs of intoxicated or unsafe drivers and stay clear of them.

SWIMMING

- Stay within marked, safe swimming areas.
- At the ocean, swim near the life guard stations and never go beyond the restricted areas. If you are not a strong swimmer, stick to wading and playing in shallow water.
- Never swim alone.
- Before diving, check for water depth. Feet first for safety sake!
- Do not trust floats and tubes. They fail easily and float children into deep water.
- At the ocean, read the signs on the Life Guard stands: The signs generally have important information on them i.e. conditions of the day; warnings about stingrays, jelly fish and other potential hazards in the water.
- If caught in a Rip Tide swim horizontal to the shore until out of it.
- When the lifeguard blows the whistle get out of the water or come closer to shore. Do not ignore his/her directions.

FLYING

- If you are prone to motion sickness sit over the wing or toward the front of the plane where the ride is smoother.
- If you have a cold or upper respiratory congestion it is best not to fly. If it cannot be avoided, take a decongestant before your flight and again an hour before landing. This will help pressure from developing up in your ears.
- To help with jet lag avoid alcohol and caffeine while flying.
- On long flights, drink plenty of fluids (8 oz. for every hour of flying) Exercise and stretch your legs. Never cross your legs for extended periods.
- Remember altitude increases the effects of certain medications and alcohol. One glass of wine in the air is comparable to three on the ground.

Relax and have fun!

The Staff at Affiliated EAP wish you and yours a safe and enjoyable summer.

FIRST AID

- Keep a first aid kit on hand. It should be well stocked with a thermometer, bandages, first aid cream, tweezers, alcohol saturated pads, meat tenderizer, a Tylenol or aspirin product, salt (for removing leeches), antihistamines, and hydrocortisone cream.
- **Bee Stings.** Meat tenderizer mixed with a little water helps counter-attack the bee histamine. Baking soda or mud packs also help.
- **Jelly fish stings.** Ammonia and water is a base and works best with jelly fish stings.
- If unusual swelling or difficulty breathing occurs, transport immediately to a health facility or call 911.
- Vaseline helps heal sunburn.
- Remember to carry insurance and medical information.

SAFETY FOR LITTLE ONES

- Children look alike on the beach and in crowds. They can quickly wander off. Have them wear something that will differentiate them from all the others (a brightly colored bandanna around neck, a brightly colored hat, bathing suit with a distinctive color, or a special vest. Know what they are wearing should you need to give a description.
- Sit near a lifeguard station and tell the child the number of the station.
- Have child wear an identification bracelet. (I used a luggage tag on my child's wrist) Put on it his/her name, your name, the hotel and phone numbers where you're staying.
- Program the child with information that will help them be found and teach them to stay in one place if lost.

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