

Remember Safety and Health This Summer

Summer is here! Summer is a busy time of year, we spend extra time fighting off bugs, hanging out in the sun, planning vacations, and taking new adventures. Sometimes the joys of summer can cause more headaches than smiles.

Keeping health and safety in mind this summer is a great way to avoid the headaches that summer brings. Keeping your families health and safety in mind when planning your next summer adventure is a sure way for your family to have a fun and memorable summer.

Festivals and amusement parks are a great place to take the kids. They provide hours of fun, but they have a high potential for families to become separated. The National Safety Council suggests the following guidelines:

- Select a meeting place in case someone gets lost.
- Make sure children know their parents first and last names.
- Always carry a photo of your child.
- Teach your children to never go with a stranger.

Cookouts and picnics are always a treat. They allow us to eat great food, enjoy good company, and spend some quality time outside. Even though these events tend to be relaxed prepare yourself by using these simple guidelines:

- Pack well-wrapped food into insulated coolers and keep it in the shade with the lid on.
- Be sure to cook burgers until they are no longer pink in the middle and poultry until the juices run clear.
- Eat everything within a two-hour period and return leftovers to the cooler. Grill away from anything that can burn.
- Dispose of garbage properly.
- Don't litter when visiting camping areas or parks.
- Cover food at outdoor events to avoid attracting bees and wasps.

Most of our summer fun time happens outdoors, and in this area that means a lot of sun and humidity. With temperatures soaring near 90 degrees day after day, here are some tips to prepare you for inevitable summer heat:

- Drink plenty of fluids, even if you don't feel thirsty. Water is the best fluid to drink, but a quick fix to quench your thirst is an electrolyte-rich sports drink, which replaces salt and minerals that are lost during heavy sweating.
- To avoid exposure to ultraviolet radiation, wear a wide-brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirt, pants and sunglasses that filter out at least 90% of the UV rays. Sunscreen should have an SPF of at least 15 and the time spent in the sun should be limited from 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Eat smaller meals more often. Avoid food high in proteins since they increase metabolic heat.
- Wear loose fitting, light colored clothing.
- Remember your pets. Provide them with extra water and don't leave them in a parked vehicle, even if you crack the windows. There isn't enough air circulation to keep them from getting hot.

No matter where your summer adventures take you it is always important to be safe. The kids are out of school and ready to go and play, help keep them safe with these general health and safety reminders:

- Learn CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). The training is valuable and will last a lifetime.

- Swim safely and never let children swim unsupervised. Teach them rules such as: don't dive into unfamiliar water and never push or jump on others in the water. Make sure kids know to use the buddy system so they aren't swimming alone.
- Always wear a helmet and protective gear, whether riding a bicycle, skateboarding, in-line skating, riding horses, motorcycles and ATV's. Make sure helmets are positioned properly and fit snugly with the straps properly buckled.
- Never let children wear clothing that has drawstrings or loose straps while playing on playground equipment so strangulation will not occur. Make sure equipment is secured and swings are made of rubber or canvas. Check the surface under the equipment to see if it is soft so it will provide an absorbed fall.

Safety, health, and fun are all important elements for a good summer. For more information on summer health and safety contact the University of Missouri Extension Office at 660-885-5556.

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