

SUN AND SAFETY TIPS

From The American College of Emergency Physicians

Whether your favorite outdoor activity is swimming, sailing, or simply relaxing in the sun, you probably enjoy longer days and warmer weather in the summer. Unfortunately, the number of unintentional injuries increases so much during the summer months that the period from Memorial Day through Labor Day is often called “trauma season.”

To help keep your summer safe and enjoyable, the American College of Emergency Physicians offers the following tips:

Sun Tips

- Wear a hat, light colored clothing and a waterproof sun-screen with a “sun protection factor” — or SPF — of 15 or more, which will protect most skin types. *It is especially important to take these precautions between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. when the sun is strongest.*

- If you become overheated, sit in the shade and try to keep your skin cool and moist.

- Check with your doctor before sunbathing if you take any prescription drugs. Some medicines can increase your



risk of sunburn, or interact with the sun to cause rashes or other side effects. *Remember that once skin is sunburned it is more sensitive to further exposure.*

- When participating in outdoor activities, drink enough water or other liquids to avoid

dehydration. Avoid alcoholic beverages.

Biking

Approximately 1,000 children under age 16 die in bike accidents each year and more than 75% of bike-related deaths and one-third of all treated bike injuries involve head injuries. To prevent injuries:

- Always wear a bike helmet.
- Drive on the right with traffic.
- Avoid riding at night, but if you must, wear brightly colored or reflective clothing.
- Make sure your bike is the correct size. You should be able to straddle the bike with both feet on the ground.
- Young children should use coaster brakes — the kind that brake when you pedal back-

wards. Before using handbrakes, hands should be large enough and strong enough to use the levers.

Diving, Swimming and Boating

Approximately 4,300 people drowned in 1992 while swimming, boating, or playing in the water. As many as half of all drownings take place during the months of June, July and August. To prevent drowning or serious injuries, be sure to:

- Supervise young children when in the tub, swimming pool or lake.
- Make sure there are no dangerous objects under the water and that it is deep enough for diving.
- Teach your children to swim.
- Never drink alcoholic beverages when swimming, diving or boating.

- Learn CPR.
- Always wear life preservers when boating, even if you can swim.
- Never swim alone.
- Enclose home pools with a fence.

Camping/Outdoors

- Always bring a first aid kit.
- Be cautious when exploring, chopping wood, or building fires.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants and use insect repellent to avoid insect bites *See below.*

Insect Bites

- Avoid perfumes, bright colored clothing, and food, in areas with bees since this attracts them.
- Wear insect repellent, long sleeved clothing and perhaps a headnet.

- Check for ticks, chiggers, etc. every day.
- If you spot an insect or a tick, gently remove with tweezers and swab the bite with rubbing alcohol. *Remember that ticks can cause Lyme Disease or Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. Both of these diseases must be treated by a physicians.*

The symptoms of Lyme Disease are:

- A bulls-eye shaped rash 5-20 inches in diameter. It is white in the center and bright red on the outside.
- Flu-like symptoms, a feeling of weakness or discomfort, sore throat, dry cough, stiff neck, swollen glands and photosensitivity.

Symptoms of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever will usually appear seven to ten days after the bite and include headache, fever, and rash on hands and feet.