

2011 Summer Safety Tips

Sun protection

Skin cancer is the most-commonly diagnosed cancer in the United States; it accounts for about half of all cancers in the United States., About 53,600 new cases of skin cancer were diagnosed in 2007, according to the American Cancer Society. Follow these easy tips to protect yourself and your family from the sun's harmful rays:

- Wear protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat that shades your face, neck and ears.
- Seek shade whenever possible.
- Wear sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher as well as UVA and UVB protection.
- Re-apply sunscreen regularly, especially after swimming, perspiring heavily or drying skin with a towel.
- Wear sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays.
- Avoid direct sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when the sun's rays are strongest.

Heat-related illness

People suffer heat-related illness when the body's temperature control system is overloaded. The body normally cools itself by sweating. But under some conditions, sweating just isn't enough. In such cases, a person's body temperature rises rapidly. Very high body temperatures may damage the brain or other vital organs. Several factors affect the body's ability to cool itself during extremely hot weather. When the humidity is high, sweat will not evaporate as quickly, preventing the body from releasing heat quickly. Other conditions that can limit the ability to regulate temperature include old age, youth (age 0-4), obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sunburn, and prescription drug use and alcohol use. You can help prevent heat related illness by following these tips:

- Drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol and caffeine; they can add to dehydration and increase the effects of heat illness.
- Avoid outdoor activities during the hottest parts of the day.
- Get to a shady area.
- Try and cool yourself using whatever methods you can. For example, immerse yourself in a tub of cool water; take a cool shower or spray yourself cool water from a garden hose.

Symptoms of heat-related illnesses are:

- Heavy sweating.
- Paleness.
- Muscle cramps.
- Tiredness.
- Weakness.
- Dizziness.
- Headache.
- Nausea or fainting.

West Nile virus

West Nile virus (WNV) is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. It has caused illness and death in humans, wildlife and domestic animals, especially birds and horses. In humans, it causes an influenza-like illness that may lead to aseptic meningitis, encephalitis and death, especially in people age 50 or older.

In 2010, five human cases of WNV were reported to ODH (Allen County (1) Hamilton County (1) Montgomery County (1) Putnam County (2)).

West Nile virus protection:

- Avoid outdoor activities between dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most likely to be active.
- Cover up by wearing socks, shoes, long pants and long-sleeved shirts; wear light colors as these are least likely to attract mosquitoes.
- Use mosquito repellent containing DEET, 30 percent for adults and 10 percent for children.

West Nile virus prevention:

- Remove any discarded tires.
- Dispose of tin cans, empty pots and other similar containers.
- Make sure roof gutters drain properly.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs.
- Drain water from pool covers.
- Change water in bird baths weekly.
- Turn over plastic pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Encourage neighbors to take these steps on their property as well.

Food Safety

The *E. coli* O157 bacterium is blamed for roughly 73,000 infections and 61 deaths in the United States each year, according to the CDC. Most illnesses from *E. coli* O157 are associated with eating undercooked, contaminated ground beef, making it important to cook hamburgers to an internal temperature of at least 160 °F. Use a meat thermometer to be sure, as contaminated meat looks and smells normal and can turn brown before disease-causing bacteria are killed.

- Wash hands thoroughly* before eating, preparing food, after using the bathroom, changing diapers or after contact with animals.
- Cook all ground beef thoroughly, until juices are no longer pink. Use a meat thermometer to ensure it is cooked to 160 °F.
- Wash meat thermometers between uses.
- Wash counters and utensils with hot, soapy water after coming in contact with raw meat.
- When cooking outdoors, use separate plates for raw meat and cooked meat.
- Keep raw meats and their juices away from other foods.
- When ordering hamburger at a restaurant, cut the patty at its thickest part to make certain the center is not still pink. If it is pink, return it for further cooking and ask for a new bun and plate.
- Avoid swallowing lake or pool water while swimming.

- People and children suffering from diarrhea should avoid swimming in public pools or lakes, sharing baths and preparing food.

* Thorough hand washing is defined as using warm water and washing with soap for at least 30 seconds. In public restrooms, use your arm or a paper towel to turn off the faucet and, if available, use the automatic door opener to exit the bathroom.

Grilling Safety

It's safe to picnic and grill in the summer, but it's especially important to be vigilant about food preparation. We encourage our residents to:

- Keep meat and poultry refrigerated until ready to use. Take out only the meat and poultry that will immediately be placed on the grill.
- When using a cooler, keep it out of the direct sun and place it in the shade or shelter. Avoid opening the lid too often, which lets cold air out and warm air in. Pack beverages in one cooler and perishables in a separate cooler.
- Cook food to a safe internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. Meat and poultry cooked on a grill often browns very fast on the outside. Use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe internal temperature. Whole poultry should reach 180 °F; breasts, 170 °F. Hamburgers made of ground beef should reach 160 °F; ground poultry, 165 °F. Beef, veal and lamb steaks, roasts and chops can be cooked to 145 °F. All cuts of pork should reach 160 °F.
- NEVER partially grill meat or poultry and finish cooking later.
- After cooking meat and poultry on the grill, keep it hot until served - at 140 °F or warmer.
- Keep cooked meats hot by setting them to the side of the grill rack, not directly over the coals where they could overcook. At home, the cooked meat can be kept hot in a warm oven (approximately 200 °F), in a chafing dish or slow cooker or on a warming tray.
- When taking food off the grill, use a clean platter. Don't put cooked food on the same platter that held raw meat or poultry. Any harmful bacteria present in the raw meat juices could contaminate safely cooked food.
- In hot weather (above 90 °F), food should never sit out for more than one hour.
- Refrigerate any leftovers promptly in shallow containers. Discard any food left out more than two hours (one hour if temperatures are above 90 °F).
- Never leave a grill unattended.

Fireworks Safety

Summer is also a time for celebrations. The Fourth of July is fast approaching. Your local health department is reminding you that fireworks can be extremely dangerous, cause permanent injury and sometimes death. In Ohio, it is also illegal to light most fireworks. Each year, fireworks injure thousands of children. The eyes, face and/or hands are the body parts most often injured. Between June 20 and July 20, 2008, There were 900 injuries (in the US) associated with firecrackers, 800 associated with sparklers and 300 associated with rockets. Of the injuries associated with firecrackers, 500 involved small firecrackers. It's important to follow these safety tips:

- Remember fireworks are not toys.
- Always leave fireworks to trained professionals. That means sparklers too; they can get as hot as 1,800 °F.

- Attend only public fireworks displays put on by trained professionals and stay back at least 500 feet from the launch area.

Bathing Beach Safety

Beach water can become polluted from many sources including, but not limited to, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and combined sewer overflows; urban, rural, and agricultural runoff; malfunctioning septic tanks and aeration systems; industrial wastes, boating wastes, human and animal wastes.

During the summer months, public beaches along Lake Erie and at Ohio's inland lakes are sampled for *E. coli* bacteria. The presence of this bacteria in beach water is a good indicator of pollution that could be potentially harmful to swimmers. When the amount of bacteria in the water exceeds state standards, beaches are posted with signs that advise against swimming.

Harmful Algal Blooms

Cyanobacteria, often called blue-green algae, are bacteria (*not algae*) that are naturally found in Ohio lakes, ponds, and slow-moving streams. Although many species of algae do not produce toxins, some species of blue-green algae can cause harmful algal blooms (HABs).

We urge people and their pets to avoid contact with Ohio's lakes, ponds and rivers where cyanobacteria blooms are present. We also advise our residents not to swim, water-ski/tube or boat at high speeds in areas where these blooms are occurring. By participating in these activities lake goers risk accidental ingestion (drinking/swallowing), inhalation, and skin contact with harmful toxins which can be produced by the blooms.

It is important for individuals to follow posted advisories at Ohio lakes. Signs will be posted at public lakes if a HAB has been identified and/or if there are unsafe levels of toxins in the water. The State has developed standards for the posting of **Ohio Recreational Use HAB Advisories**. There are three recreational use advisories

1) An ***algae bloom advisory*** will be posted for a recreational contact area once an algal bloom has been identified and the State has confirmed it is a harmful algal bloom capable of producing toxin. The public would be advised not to ingest water and avoid contact with surface scum.

2) The ***public health advisory*** would be posted when tests conclude microcystin levels are at least six parts per billion (ppb). At this point, the public would be advised that swimming and wading are not recommended, water should not be swallowed and surface scum should be avoided

3) A ***no contact advisory*** would recommend the public to avoid all contact with the water at that location. A no contact advisory would be posted if test results show microcystin levels at least 20 ppb and there has been a report of human illness or pet death. If a no contact advisory is posted for a recreational contact area, the State may sample the lake to determine if an open water no contact advisory should be posted.

Once an advisory is posted, the State will periodically sample until microcystin is below acceptable thresholds or the end of the beach season in Ohio. To find out which lakes have advisories posted visit: www.ohioalgaefinfo.com.

Preventing Recreational Water Illnesses

Every year, recreational water venues (for example, swimming pools, hot tubs, lakes, and oceans) receive more than 360 million visits from individuals around the country. This makes swimming the third most popular recreational activity in the US and the most popular recreational activity for children. To truly enjoy a safe and healthy swimming experience it is important for swimmers and hot tub users to know the steps they should take to protect themselves and others from potential health risks.

Recreational Water Illnesses are caused by germs you can get by swallowing, breathing in mist from, or having contact with contaminated waters. Follow these six steps for healthy swimming:

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea.
- Don't swallow pool/hot tub water.
- Practice good hygiene. Shower with soap before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Germs on your body end up in the water.
- Take your kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers often.
- Change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area and not at poolside.
- Wash your children thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before they go swimming.

Loud Sounds

Exposure to loud sounds, like ones caused by lawnmowers and chainsaws can cause hearing loss. This summer, be sure to use hearing protection devices while doing these summer chores. Also, while mowing the lawn don't use MP3 players or other music playing devices.

Noise-induced hearing loss can lead to communication difficulties, learning difficulties, pain or ringing in the ears, distorted or muffled hearing, and an inability to hear some environmental sounds and warning signals

Seek a hearing evaluation by a licensed audiologist or other qualified professional, especially you have a concern about potential hearing loss.

Never leave your child alone in the car – not even for a minute!

In 2010, more than 49 children died while alone in a vehicle. Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle, even with the window slightly open. It only takes a few short minutes before a child can become dangerously overheated. Believe it or not, routines and distractions have caused people to mistakenly leave children behind in cars.

- Place a cell phone, PDA, purse, briefcase, gym bag or whatever is to be carried from the car, on the floor in front of a child in a backseat. This triggers adults to see children when they open the rear door and reach for their belongings.

- Set your cell phone or Blackberry reminder to be sure you dropped your child off at day care.
- Set your computer calendar program, such as Outlook, to ask, “Did you drop off at daycare today?”
- Have a plan that if your child is late for daycare that you will be called within a few minutes. Be especially careful if you change your routine for dropping off little kids at day care.

Ticks

Tick-borne diseases can be transmitted only by the bite of an infected tick. An infected animal or person cannot pass the infection on to another animal or person. Ticks normally become infected by taking a blood meal from an infected animal. Use caution when removing ticks from pets and be sure to check yourself and loved ones after spending time in ticks’ habitat. The risk of exposure to ticks and disease can be reduced by using these precautions:

- Avoid tick-infested areas (i.e. wooded or weedy areas).
- If exposure is unavoidable, tuck pants into sock tops or boots.
- Wear light-colored clothing to make it easier to find crawling ticks.
- Use repellants and follow label instructions carefully.
- Check children for ticks frequently.
- Use caution when handling ticks and dispose of properly.
- If a tick is attached, remove it as soon as possible; this reduces your risk of infection.
- Shield fingers with a paper towel or use tweezers. Grasp the tick close to the skin. With steady pressure, pull the tick straight up and out.
- Do not twist or jerk the tick. This may cause the mouth parts to be left in the skin.
- Do not crush or puncture the tick.
- Do not use a flame or cigarette to remove a tick. This may cause the tick to burst and increase disease risk.
- After removing a tick, thoroughly disinfect the bite site and wash hands with soap and water.

Around the Yard

It is now time to seal up, trap up, and clean up to prevent rodent infestation. As you're clearing out clutter, fill any gaps or holes inside and outside your home. Eliminate or seal rodent food sources such as pet food, bird feeders, and garbage cans. Elevate hay, woodpiles, and garbage cans at least 1 foot off the ground, and trim grass and shrubbery within 100 feet of your home.

Gardening is a great outdoor activity for people of all ages. Stay safe and healthy as you grab your tools and head outside. Wear gloves, use safety gear when handling equipment and chemicals, protect yourself from the sun, and use insect repellent. Also watch out for extreme heat and know your limitations.

A sandbox is fun place for you and young children to play, but know that a cat sees that sandbox as a litter box. So, keep the sandbox covered to protect young children from toxoplasmosis, a parasite that people can get from contaminated cat feces (stool).

Pollens and air pollutants can be triggers for allergic reactions and asthma. Some experiences include nasal and sinus allergies and hives. Asthma can cause recurrent symptoms such as wheezing, chest tightness, shortness of breath and coughing. Stay healthy by properly taking any prescription or over-the-counter allergy medicine and having and following an asthma action plan. Wearing a protective nose and mouth mask, or even sunglasses or protective eyewear, while doing yard work could help to avoid the triggers that cause allergy and asthma complications.

Child Injury Prevention

Although summer should be a time of fun, outdoor activity and exploration, unfortunately, there is also an increased risk for injury. Summer is often referred to as “trauma season” by health care professionals working in emergency departments. Across the country, children 14 years and younger will be rushed to emergency rooms for treatment of injuries nearly 3 million times from May through August.

Injuries are the leading cause of death and disability for children and youth. Injury rates are highest during the summer months for children and teenagers because it is the time when they are exposed to more injury risks.

Based on a 2007 report from Safe Kids USA, Ohio ranks 27 out of 51 with an unintentional injury death rate during May through August of 3.5 per 100,000 children younger than 14.

The majority of unintentional injury deaths from May through August involve drowning, biking, falls, motor vehicle occupant activities and pedestrian incidents. More information on each subject area is available by clicking below.

We all want to help our children live to their full potential and keep them safe and secure. Parents can play a key role in protecting the children they love from injury. Get involved with your child and know where they are going and what they are doing outside. This will allow you to take the necessary steps to help protect them. We encourage families to follow these simple tips to protect your children from the top summertime risks:

- Actively supervise your child when engaging in summertime activities, such as swimming and playing on playground equipment or in backyards.
- Use the right safety gear for your child’s activities, such as a:
 - Helmet for wheeled sports and sporting activities.
 - Car seat, booster seat or seat belt as appropriate when traveling.
 - Life jacket for open water swimming and boating.
- Role model proper safety behavior. Children are more likely to follow safety rules when they see their parents doing so.
- Surround your pool or spa with a four-sided fence to keep children safe. The fence should be at least four feet high with self-closing, self-latching gates. An inflatable pool needs to be surrounded by a fence, just like any other pool, and parents need to empty these pools when not in use.

- Make sure your home playground is safe. Keep 12 inches safe surfacing, such as mulch, shredded rubber or fine sand, extending at least six feet in all directions around the equipment. Remove hood and neck drawstrings from your child's clothing.
- Check for children around vehicles. Walk all the way around a parked vehicle to check for children before entering a car and starting the motor. Don't let children play in driveways, streets, parking lots or unfenced yards adjacent to busy streets.
- Keep children away from the grill area while preheating and cooking, and while the grill is cooling.
- Remove potential poisons from your yard, including poisonous plants, pesticides and pool chemicals.
- Apply sunscreen rated 15 to 30 minutes before going out, and reapply frequently.
- Make sure your child drinks plenty of water. A child who seems tired or achy should rest in the shade or go inside for a while. Get immediate medical help any time a child's skin is hot to the touch (with or without perspiration), if a child has a seizure, or if they become disoriented in hot weather.

Summer Animal Exhibits

Exhibits such as petting zoos and fairs allow children of all ages to have the thrilling experience of coming face-to-face with animals. This interaction allows people to learn more about animals and helps to build an important human-animal bond. Unfortunately, many people become sick every year because of a visit to an animal exhibit. It is important to remember that animals sometimes carry germs that are harmful to humans.

When people forget to wash their hands after petting an animal, or bring food or drinks into an area where animals are being housed, they are at risk for becoming ill. If you are visiting an Animal Exhibit follow these tips:

- Find out where hand washing stations are located. Always wash your hands right after petting animals or touching the animal enclosure.
- Always wash hands upon exiting animal areas even if you did not touch an animal, after going to the toilet, before eating and drinking, before preparing food or drinks, and after removing soiled clothes or shoes.
- Running water and soap are best. Use hand sanitizers if running water and soap are not available. Be sure to wash your hands with soap and water as soon as a sink is available.
- Keep food and drinks out of animal areas.
- Food should be prepared, served, and eaten only in areas where animals are not permitted (with the exception of service animals).
- Do not share your food with animals.
- Children younger than 5 years old need supervision in animal areas.
- Never allow children to put their hands or objects (for example: pacifiers) in their mouth while interacting with animals.
- Do not take or use strollers, bottles, pacifiers, spill-proof cups, or toys in animal areas.

Fairs and Festivals

A big part of summer for many people is attending fairs and festivals. There are always fun things to see and experience, including art work, music, games, and rides. One of the biggest draws to these events is the many different types of foods and drinks available.

Many foodborne illnesses are caused by consuming foods or beverages contaminated with germs. One reason for the increase of foodborne illnesses in the summertime is that people are cooking and eating outside at places such as fairs and festivals more often. Sometimes, the usual safety controls that a kitchen provides, like thermostat-controlled cooking, refrigeration, and washing facilities, may not be available when cooking and dining at these events.

Remember that food practices should be the same at fairs as they are at home: Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill. Also remember to wash your hands thoroughly before eating, preparing food, after using the bathroom, changing diapers or after contact with animals.

When purchasing food from a vendor, look for healthy options first. If they are not available, consider bringing your own food to save money and calories. Bringing food from home allows you to eat a healthy meal or snack as a family, while still enjoying the festive atmosphere around you. Don't forget to keep safe food storage practices in mind.

If you bring food to a fair or festival from home, be sure to keep food handling and storage times in mind. Don't let food sit out for more than two hours. On a hot day (90°F or higher), reduce this time to one hour. Be sure to put perishable items in a cooler or insulated bag. For budget-minded folks, eat before you go to the fair.

Here are some items to consider before buying food from a vendor:

- Does the vendor have a clean/tidy workstation?
- Does the vendor have a sink for employees to wash their hands?
- Do the employees wear gloves or use tongs when handling food?
- Does the vendor have refrigeration on site for raw ingredients or pre-cooked foods?
- Has the vendor been inspected? Ask and make sure a food inspection has been completed.