Plan well to avoid summer health hazards

Taking precautions against the hazards of summer is especially important this season if you’re in a region experiencing a heat wave. To keep safe, hang out in places with air conditioning, avoid strenuous activities, wear light clothing, and drink water frequently. Never leave people or pets in a vehicle unattended.*

Wherever you are, here are additional summer safety tips to follow:

**Use sunscreen with an SPF of 30+** that blocks both UVA and UVB rays, wear sunglasses with UV protection, and wear a wide-brimmed hat. Try to stay in the shade from 10 AM to 2 PM, when the burning UV rays are most intense.

**Apply tick and other bug repellents** and wear long pants in grassy or woodsy areas.

**Avoid summer picnic food poisoning.** Make sure that foods with mayo, dairy, eggs or meat are kept refrigerated and thoroughly cooked.

**Bring a day-pack with essentials.** Consider including a mini first aid kit, needed medications, a mask, hand sanitizer, your photo ID, health insurance card and, if you have it, a copy of your vaccination card.

**Check ahead for any COVID-19 safety precautions or restrictions for your destination.** Visit: https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel

**Wear appropriate protective/safety gear.** Use bike helmets and life jackets. Wear closed-toe shoes and sunglasses when mowing the lawn. Additionally, if walking or biking after dark, wear reflective strips on your clothing and bike and use a small headlamp.

**Safeguard your road trips.** Pack a flashlight, flares, batteries, jumper cables, reflective devices, a spare tire and tools to change it, a jug of water and a blanket; also include the phone number for roadside assistance. Plus, bring a detailed map as phone reception may not be reliable in all areas.

**Be sensible and follow the rules!** Don’t drink alcohol if you’re boating or engaging in other water sports, for example. Follow warnings for swimming, staying on trails, building safe campfires, and using fireworks. On roadsides, always walk facing traffic, but bike in the same direction as traffic. Cross streets only at crosswalks. Let people know your intended routes/destinations and take a buddy to hike or swim with you, especially in unfamiliar areas.

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One final safety reminder:

Go to the ER or call 911 for any severe or life-threatening symptoms or conditions including signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. But even moderate pain, bleeding, difficulty breathing, swelling, nausea, burning, dizziness, and other symptoms should prompt you to call your doctor or visit urgent care.

*For more heat wave safety tips, visit: https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/heat-wave-safety.html*
Nature and your well-being

Spending time in nature has many benefits for your well-being. From different types of activities you can do outdoors to get your body moving, to cultivating a healthy garden, to keeping the earth clean, limiting waste and reducing pollution, there are countless ways nature impacts our physical health. Additionally, the amount of time you spend in nature has numerous positive effects on your emotional well-being, including improved mood and attention, reduced stress and increased happiness. Get outside more with these tips.

**Get out in the sun (while wearing sunscreen).** Exposure to natural light can help boost your mood and help regulate your circadian rhythm (body clock) for better sleep.

**Plant a garden.** Growing your own food has many benefits, such as exercise and fresh air. Plus, gardening can produce healthy and nutritious fruits and veggies that you can enjoy for many months to come.

**Join a Community Supported Agriculture farm (CSA).** If you don’t have the time or space to start your own garden, a CSA is a great way to get fresh produce. By joining, you purchase a share of the crops of the farm as well as volunteer to do a share of the work.

**Improve the health of our planet.** Pollution and litter affect the environment and, as a result, can affect our physical and mental health. Volunteer for a community clean up or sign up for a charity walk/run that benefits environmental groups.

**Take a walk—a tried and true strategy to get outside.** Even a quick walk outdoors can leave you feeling refreshed.

Remember, as the days get warmer, it becomes increasingly important to stay hydrated and keep your body cool. Also, don’t forget your sunscreen!
Managing conflict at work: Tips to stay cool

As more people are returning to work, you may find that your coworkers are processing the many changes brought on by aspects of the pandemic in different ways, with views that might conflict with yours. This can sometimes lead to difficult discussions, making it hard to focus on your job. But no matter the topic of discussion, it’s important to properly and respectfully manage any conflicts that arise.

Here are general tips to keep in mind if the dialogue gets heated:

**Respect differences.** Remember that disagreements are often the result of people having varying backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs. Honor those differences and the freedom to have them.

**Be a good role model.** Treat others the way you would want to be treated. Try not to interrupt. Truly listen, and give the other person the attention you would like to have.

**Be cautious about strong conversations in the workplace.** A fiery debate could lead to unnecessary conflicts.

**Breathe deeply to “buy time.”** Count to 10 to gather your thoughts. This will help you act thoughtfully and not just react on impulse.

**Sometimes it’s best to give a polite reply and take a time-out.** An example: “You’ve given me some things to think about. Thank you.” Take the high road. Be part of the solution instead of fueling a problem. Channel your strong convictions into volunteering, for example, or otherwise committing to making a positive difference while respecting those who believe differently.

For more help, talk to Health Advocate, your health practitioner or a licensed counselor.

UV Safety Month

Learn all about the damaging effects of getting too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure from the sun and how to protect you and your family.  