

For Your Upcoming Picnic, Don't Hold the Mayo and Other Summer Tips on How to Stay Healthy

By ACSH Staff — May 23, 2002

Contrary to popular wisdom, mayonnaise in your summer chicken salad is usually not the cause of food poisoning it is more likely that the source of the problem is improperly handled chicken (undercooked, unrefrigerated or both). Likewise, merely protecting yourself against UVB sunrays will not necessarily prevent skin damage or skin cancer. These tips are among many released today by a panel of scientists from the American Council on Science and Health to help people avoid some of the potential drawbacks of summertime fun.

The safety tips include:

- * Prevent premature aging and reduce your risk of skin cancer by using a good "broad-spectrum" sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB rays.
- * Choose sunglasses that block 99-100 percent of both UVA and UVB radiation.
- * Avoid potentially allergenic insect stings and bites such as allergies can be life-threatening. Allergic individuals should wear warning identification and possibly carry medication to counteract the effects of stings or bites.
- * Avoid overheating in the summer sun by, among other things, drinking plenty of liquids and taking breaks in cool spots.
- * For safe swimming and boating, never swim alone and know your limitations. Most of the 7,000 yearly deaths by drowning are preventable.
- * Always wear the crucial protective helmet when biking or rollerblading the American Medical Association states that, of the 800 cyclists who die each year, 75 percent die from head injuries.
- * To avoid getting bacterial food poisoning, the basic rule is to keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot.
- * Be aware that there are tiny deer ticks that carry Lyme disease, and take precautions to avoid being bitten. If you do get bitten, early treatment is important, so know which symptoms to watch out for.
- * Don't let an itch ruin your vacation poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac are widespread in the United States. To avoid or lessen the unpleasant itching rash that these plants cause, there are products that can help prevent it in the first place or lessen the impact of contacting these plants.
- * Pack a healthy suitcase one that includes medical supplies and other necessities.
- * Prevent and treat travelers' maladies such as motion sickness and travelers' diarrhea.

"Whether you're traveling around the world or relaxing at home, to avoid spoiling your summer fun, take seriously the tips we've gathered in our latest booklet ," says Dr. Elizabeth Whelan, ACSH President.

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