

Summer Is for Fun, Not Injury, Says Health Group

By ACSH Staff — May 20, 2009

New York, New York—May 2009. Nothing can spoil vacations faster than a severe case of poison ivy, an intense sunburn, or a life-threatening allergic reaction to a bee sting. It is possible, however, to keep such threats at bay with a little foresight and care. To help the public do so, physicians and scientists associated with the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) have updated their list of [Health and Safety Tips for Your Summer Vacation](#) ^[1].

Some of their advice includes:

- Beware of the summer sun—prevent accelerated aging and reduce the risk of skin cancers by using effective sunscreens and/or protective clothing. And make sure your product is not outdated. A tan may look good now, but as you get older, your skin won't.
- Avoid poison ivy, oak, and sumac—they are widespread in the United States, and contacting them is a sure way to ruin a vacation! Know where they're found, how to identify and avoid them, and the itchy blisters they cause.
- Protect yourself against tiny deer ticks that carry Lyme disease. They are common in some areas—know what they and their bites look like. If you're walking in a suspect area, wear protective clothing, use repellent, and check yourself and children carefully to avoid any bites.
- Never swim alone, and know your limits—whether in a lake, pool, or the ocean. Most drowning deaths could have been prevented.
- Wear protective helmets when cycling or rollerblading—head injuries are major causes of death from cycling accidents.
- Carry medication and wear identification if you're allergic to insect bites or stings.
- Know how to prevent and treat travelers' maladies such as motion or altitude sickness and travelers' diarrhea
- Protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses that block 99-100% of both UVA and UVB radiation.
- Pack a healthy suitcase—take any prescription medications in your carry-on luggage, and if traveling out of the country, take a prescription along.
- Drink plenty of fluids and take breaks in cool spots when overheated to avoid dehydration. Be informed about the symptoms of heat stroke.

"We want people to take our tips seriously and safeguard their summer activities," said Dr. Elizabeth Whelan, ACSH president. "Great summer weather provides many opportunities for outdoor activities," she continued. "We at ACSH want people to enjoy their summer with a maximum of fun and a minimum of harm." Find ACSH's advice for doing so in [Health and Safety Tips for Your Summer Vacation](#) ^[1] .

The American Council on Science and Health is an independent, non-profit consumer education organization concerned with issues related to food, nutrition, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, lifestyle,

the environment, and health. ACSH, directed and advised by a consortium of over 350 physicians and scientists, urges Americans to focus their efforts on things that matter -- such as maintaining a healthy body weight and not smoking -- rather than the countless pieces of nonsensical or trivial health advice that fill the news.

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