

# Summer health tips: Sunscreen, bug repellents, & more!

By ACSH Staff — May 26, 2015



In order to avoid easily preventable spoilers of summer leisure

time fun and travel, we at ACSH encourage you to take seriously the tips given below. It is our hope that they will help you to have a happy, healthy summer vacation!

1. Moderation is the key in sun exposure. If you are going to be out in the sun, use broad-spectrum sunscreen protecting you from both UVA and UVB rays. And make sure to use a sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher, though most experts advise against going over 30. Reapply sunscreen often, especially if you are going in the water or sweating.
2. Many people like to start the tanning season in a tanning salon so they won't appear totally white the first time they hit the beach. Not a good idea. The tanning rays emitted by sun lamps can damage the skin and cause skin cancers as much as true sunlight; in fact the FDA has warned that tanning beds should not be used by anyone under 18.
3. Protective clothing and a hat are also very effective for avoiding too much sun. Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun. Stick to grey or green lenses and make sure the label indicates that the sunglasses block 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB radiation.
4. Always follow the rules at the pool and the beach. Make sure never to leave children unattended. Thousands of people drown each year, and more than 25 percent of these drownings involve children less than 14 years of age.
5. Summer is a great time to get outside and get some exercise. If you do engage in activities such as bike riding, horseback riding, roller skating or rollerblading, always make sure to wear a helmet and protective pads as needed. Studies in the past have indicated that helmets reduce the risk of bicycle-related injuries by up to 85 percent.
6. Avoid open areas and seek shelter during electrical storms.
7. Keep perishable foods out of the heat and in a cooler with ice or reusable cold packs until you are ready to eat to avoid getting food poisoning. Make sure to wash your hands and if no hand-washing facilities are available, bring your own pre-moistened towels or alcohol based hand sanitizers.
8. Wear insect repellent to prevent bites and stings and apply only to exposed skin or clothing.

If you have a known allergy to insect stings, make sure to carry an epinephrine pen with you at all times and know how to use it. Ticks can carry several diseases; if you find a tick on yourself or a child, remove it and save it for later identification. If you notice a rash or have flu-like symptoms, see a doctor immediately to rule out Lyme disease. Early treatment is important once symptoms begin to occur. To prevent Lyme disease, exercise precautions such as wearing insect repellent containing DEET, and inspect clothes and body immediately after returning from areas where you may have encountered ticks. Don't forget to check hair and scalp.

9. If you know you may be in an area where you can encounter Poison Ivy, Poison Oak or Poison Sumac, apply a lotion containing bentonite clay, e.g. IvyBlock. Learn to recognize these plants and avoid them. Always wear protective clothing if you may come into contact with these plants and watch where you sit!
10. To avoid heat disorders ranging from heat rash to heat stroke, pay attention to the weather reports and adjust daily routines accordingly for example schedule physically strenuous activities for cooler times of the day. Drink plenty of non-carbonated fluids before, during and after physical activities. This is especially important for people prone to kidney stones since dehydration is a risk factor for this extremely painful condition.
11. Never leave children or pets in a hot car
12. When packing for a vacation, make sure to pack an ample supply of any prescription medicines you may be taking, your health insurance card, copies of all prescriptions, over-the-counter remedies for common problems (pain relievers, antacids, antihistamines), sunscreen, lip balm, insect repellent and a basic first-aid kit.

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