

Don't Let the Sun Catch You Frying and Other Tips for a Healthy Summer

By ACSH Staff — May 11, 1998

New York, NY, May 11, 1998 The scientists and physicians at the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) know that basking in the sun is a time-honored summer activity. But it shouldn't be unless sunworshippers take adequate precautions.

The most immediate threat is painful sunburn. But the summer sun packs a few other time bombs in its arsenal, too: people who sunbathe excessively are courting wrinkles down the road and skin cancer, as well. A summer's worth of sound advice on how to deal with sun rays and other summer-time hazards is packed into ACSH's Health and Safety Tips for Your Summer Vacation. This slim, take-along booklet offers enough practical recommendations gathered from a panel of public-health experts to get the most intrepid traveler safely and happily through this summer and many to come. Here's a sampling:

- * Avoid overheating in the summer sun by drinking plenty of liquids and taking breaks in cool places.
- * To stay safe in and on the water, know your limitations and never swim alone. Most of the 7,000 deaths by drowning that occur in the United States each year are preventable.
- * Always wear a protective helmet when biking or in-line-skating. The American Medical Association reports that 75 percent of the cyclists who die each year die from head injuries.
- * To avoid bacterial food poisoning, always keep your hot foods hot and your cold foods cold. Remember: Those chicken wings are more dangerous than that jar of mayonnaise!
- * Be aware of the tiny deer ticks that carry Lyme disease. Take precautions (wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants; apply insect repellent) to avoid being bitten. If you do get bitten, know what symptoms to look for, as early treatment is important.
- * Don't let an itch scratch your trip! Poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac grow widely throughout the United States. If you suspect you've had a too-close encounter, wash the contact area with soap and water to avoid or lessen the unpleasant, itching rash these plants can cause.
- * Pack a healthy suitcase: Take along a first-aid kit, ample supplies of prescription medicines, and copies of your prescriptions.
- * Take steps to prevent such common vacation maladies as motion sickness and traveler's diarrhea. If they should occur, know how to treat them.
- * Prevent premature aging and reduce your risk of skin cancer by using a good broad-spectrum sunscreen.
- * Choose sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of both UVA and UVB radiation.
- * Always respect electrical storms. Avoid open areas, trees and telephones. Seek shelter indoors or inside a vehicle.

Says ACSH President Dr. Elizabeth Whelan: Whether you're traveling across the country, going

down to the local pool, or relaxing at home, to avoid spoiling your summer fun, read this booklet and take its tips seriously.

The New York City-based American Council on Science and Health is a nonprofit, tax-exempt consortium of over 250 physicians and scientists. ACSH publishes a wide variety of booklets, reports, and pamphlets on public-health topics, the texts of many of which are also available on ACSH's growing website, located at www.acsh.org [1].

To obtain a copy of Health and Safety Tips for Your Summer Vacation, send \$5.00 (price includes postage and handling) to:

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