

# Summer Safety Tips to Share

## 1. Learn CPR

With the majority of cardiac arrests happening at home, it's wise to be trained in Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to help loved ones immediately. Many people who suffer from cardiac events appeared healthy at the time and didn't have any known heart risk factors. Whether you're enjoying time outdoors, at a friend's home, or in your own home, knowing CPR can buy an individual precious minutes until professional medical help arrives.

## 2. Change Your Smoke Alarm Batteries

When was the last time you changed your smoke alarm batteries? Make it a priority for your summer to-do list. Don't forget to set a calendar alert for checking your smoke alarms monthly, too.

## 3. Remember Your Mask

Yes, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recently stated** fully vaccinated folks could go mask-less for the most part. But don't ditch the mask just yet. Crowded areas and venues — think a bustling train station or market — may still require you to wear a mask even if you're fully vaccinated.

## 4. Swim Smart

Kids aren't the only ones who need to practice safe swimming. Adults need to keep swimming safety in mind, too. Whether enjoying the pool, beach, lake, or river, any body of water can be dangerous if the appropriate precautions aren't taken. It's important to remember drinking alcoholic beverages and swimming don't mix. Don't overestimate your swimming abilities and avoid swimming alone, especially where there are reported strong currents in natural bodies of water. Designating an undistracted "water watcher" to keep an eye on your group can be helpful in detecting a swimmer in trouble.

## 5. Wear Daily Sunscreen

Reduce your skin cancer risk (and the early onset of wrinkles!) by wearing sunscreen daily. Most people spend more time outdoors enjoying summer activities, making it easy to forget to apply sunscreen. People with sensitive skin are most likely to burn easily in the sun. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends applying sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. Since no sunscreen can block all of the sun's UVB rays, be sure to wear sunglasses, a hat, and cool, long-sleeved clothing when outdoors for long periods of time.

## **6. Stay Hydrated**

Staying hydrated is always important for optimal body functioning, but especially during the hot and humid months. That's because fluids are lost through sweat which happens a lot more often in the summer. If you plan to spend a lot of time outdoors, make sure you keep water with you and drink it often. Consuming foods with high water content — think melons, lettuce, cucumbers, etc. — can also help you stay hydrated to avoid heat illnesses.

## **7. Prepare an Emergency Weather Kit**

Summer is known for its long days, but it's also a prime time for severe weather like thunderstorms or hurricanes. Heavy area storms can easily knock out power and scatter debris, making it difficult to travel outside the home for necessities. Ensure you have a full emergency kit ready to go with non-perishable food, flashlights, water, a first aid kit, extra medications, etc. to see you through an emergency situation.

## **8. Be a Defensive Driver**

Every summer, more drivers hit the road for vacations. With individuals still hesitant to hop aboard aircrafts, the roads are bound to be more crowded. When driving, put your cell phone away (put it in the trunk if you need to avoid temptation) and keep your eyes on the road. If you're tired, pull over for a quick nap since drowsy driving can be just as dangerous as drunk driving. And, above all, if you're under the influence, wait until you're sober before driving.

## **9. Use Insect Repellent**

Protect yourself from diseases spread by mosquitoes and ticks like dengue fever, malaria, West Nile Virus, and Lyme disease by wearing bug repellent. In addition to bug spray, you can also minimize bug bites by discarding standing water in your yard (think bird baths and kiddie pools), wearing long sleeved-clothing, and using mosquito netting, when outdoors to avoid bug bites.

## **10. Boat Safely**

Summer is a great time for boating. A few precautions to take when boating include: ensuring enough life vests are onboard; watching the weather before and during your time on the water; skipping alcoholic beverages when driving the boat; staying hydrated throughout the day.

## 11. Don't Ignore Thunder

As the saying goes, "When thunder roars, go indoors." While the odds of being hit by lightning are one in a million annually, it's still not a good idea to hang outdoors during a thunderstorm — especially if you live in a place like Florida or Texas. Remember the 30-30 rule. Once you see lightning, count to 30. If thunder claps happen before you hit 30, go inside. Additionally, avoid bathing in the shower or bath tub during thunderstorms as **lightning** can travel through plumbing.

## 12. Move It

Physical activity is a must to stay healthy. If you have the summer off — or need to use up vacation time — consider planning an active vacation. Kayaking, swimming, paddleboarding, whitewater rafting, and hiking are great outdoor activities to hit your necessary 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise each week.

## 13. Eat Healthy Food

Summer is bountiful in its harvest of fruits and veggies. Make a stop at the local produce stand or farmer's market to pick up fresh, seasonal produce options like watermelon, blackberries, zucchini, and okra when their nutrient counts are the highest. Plus, eating water-rich foods can keep you hydrated which will reduce headaches, overeating, and feeling faint on hot summer days.

## 14. Cook Food the Same Day

Planning a picnic? Make sure you cook food the same day to limit the amount of time bacteria has to grow in it. Viruses and bacteria are the most common culprits of food poisoning, which is usually just unpleasant but can send you to the hospital if you're not careful. To prevent illness, practice the four food safety steps: **clean**, separate, cook, and chill.

## 15. Limit Sun Exposure

The sun is the most damaging between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. daily. Do your best to go outside before or after that time frame. Or, cover up or work under shaded areas to limit sunburns and other risks of heat illnesses.

## 16. Drink Right

Nothing says summer like a fruity umbrella drink, right? While it's fine to have an adult beverage every once in a while, one of the most important health tips to remember is to stay hydrated. If you don't love plain water, consider infusing it with fruit. Or, switch it up and add coconut water for an electrolyte boost and refreshingly delicious drink that is better for you than other sweet beverages.

## 17. Keep Good Sleep Practices

With summer vacations and long summer days ahead of you, it's easy to mess up your sleep routine. But, experts say skipping out on quality sleep can put a damper on your health. Do your best to wake and fall asleep at the same time each day to keep your sleep patterns regular.

## 18. Watch for Power Lines

Summer is the ideal time to try out new toys and activities like kite flying, drone flying, and tree climbing with kiddos. Just be sure to watch out for low-hanging power lines. If one of your gadgets — like a kite — gets stuck, forego getting it yourself. Notify your local power company to report it. And after heavy storms, be sure to watch out on the roadway for downed power lines, too. Stay a minimum of 25-feet away from downed lines.

## 19. Keep Sanitizer on Hand

While social settings may be a bit more relaxed now due to the **COVID vaccine** rollout, it's still wise to practice good hygiene. Whether you're at a picnic, coming out of the grocery store, or holding a stair handrail, use sanitizer any time you're unable to get to a bathroom to wash your hands properly. Alcohol-based sanitizers with at least 60% of alcohol gets the job done.

## 20. Watch Your Grill

As the summer months encourage more outdoor time, firing up the grill becomes a popular activity. If you love to grill, be sure to practice food safety and fire safety. That includes only grilling outdoors, keeping kids and pets away, and keeping the grill cleaned of grease and fat. Above all, never leave a grill unattended!

## 21. Practice Smart Home Safety

Summer time is a prime time for vacations. It's also a prime time for residential burglaries. Consider setting up light timers at your home to deter would-be criminals from breaking-and-entering. Additionally, having motion lights and nighttime landscape lighting can deter criminals as well.

## 22. Connect With Others

Social interaction is an important part of **social health**. Throughout this summer, keep your mental health in check by spending time with loved ones. Doing so can elevate your mood and keep you from isolating, which can lead to depression and other mental health concerns.

## **23. Protect Your Hearing**

Summer is a great time for enjoying unique activities like sporting events, shooting ranges, concerts, etc. But it can also do a number on your hearing. Loud noises above 120 decibels can cause damage to your hearing immediately. Invest in some good ear plugs if you plan to attend any of those activities this summer.

## **24. Do What You Love**

Finding joy in life and its activities is one of the best ways to keep yourself mentally and physically young. Whether that's going out golfing with friends, playing with your grandkids, visiting a local winery, painting, wakeboarding, etc., it's important to make time to rest and relax this summer season.

## **25. Give Wildlife Space**

While it may be tempting to feed the cute ducklings by the pond or try to feed a deer from your hand, know that wildlife is just that — wild. They can be unpredictable and bite out of fear or defense. Be sure to give all wildlife that you encounter this summer season plenty of space. That goes for snakes, bears, bees, alligators, birds, deer, and other roaming critters.

## **26. Remember Bikes Are Vehicles**

With longer summer days, evenings and early mornings are perfect for solo bike rides. Not only is it great exercise, it's good for the earth, too. Always ensure that you know the rules of the road before heading out for a ride. Additionally, wearing a helmet and other safety gear — like reflective clothing — can help you stand out to other motorists on the road.

## **27. Have a First Aid Kit Together**

Be prepared for scrapes, scratches, bites, and more by having a first aid kit on hand. You'll want to keep it stocked and ensure the ointments aren't expired. Keep one at home and in your car for unexpected mini medical issues. Items like gauze pads, medical tape, bandages, eye protection, alcohol wipes, and the like are useful to have in your kit.

## **28. Prevent Fires**

The number one cause of residential fires are cooking fires. Whether you're toasting marshmallows over a fire pit or grilling on your back patio, make sure to keep any fire activities a minimum of 10 feet away from your home. Keep a fire extinguisher handy and a hose nearby to put out any unexpected fires.

## **29. Watch Your Step**

When you spend time outdoors, don't forget to always have shoes on and watch where you step. Summertime is an active time for creatures like alligators (coming out from under your car), snakes (out in the yard), bees (buzzing around in flower patches), and other outdoor hazards. Make it a point to look before you step — especially if you're exploring your favorite local parks this time of year.

## **30. Mow With Caution**

Yard upkeep may be a great workout, but it isn't without its hazards. When mowing the yard, make sure you wear long sleeve pants and shirts, along with safety goggles. Wearing close-toed shoes is a must, too, to keep rocks and other sharp objects from hurting your feet.

## **31. Take Care of Your Feet**

Flip flops may be stylish and convenient, but they wreak havoc on your feet. Your toes constantly need to grip the shoe to keep them on, which can actually lead to tendonitis in your toes. Plus, these lightweight shoes offer little to no support, which can cause foot pain and even back pain. If you notice more foot pain than normal, schedule a visit to your local podiatrist to discuss.

## **32. Watch for Recreational Water Illnesses**

Now that pools are reopening and summer beckons swimmers, it's important to remember that public swimming areas can carry a variety of bacteria and viruses — even if it isn't COVID. Be mindful of swimming only in clean public pools, otherwise you can expose yourself to bacteria that can cause respiratory, eye, neurologic, gastrointestinal, skin, and wound infections. The most common health concern is swallowing pool water that's been contaminated by human feces. Bacteria can live in improperly-balanced pools for days, so if you accidentally swallow water and feel unwell, visit your doc.

## **33. Pay Attention to Poisonous Plants**

Poison ivy, poison sumac or poison oak, causes issues for about 85% of the population. Of those, up to 15% are extremely allergic. When out working in the yard or spending time in nature, be aware of the plants you're exposing yourself to, especially if you're not wearing long sleeves and pants. The plants are found everywhere except Alaska and Hawaii, so be on the lookout for the vine.