

## Summer Safety Tips



### What you should know about being #SummerReady:

- Always practice children's water safety.
- Be mindful of health hazards caused by excess sun exposure.
- Never leave plastic water bottles in hot cars.

### Children's Water Safety

Whether you're swimming at the beach, the local pool, or at home, never let children enter the water alone unless a lifeguard is on duty or a trusted adult is carefully at watch. Sadly, most deaths from drowning occur within a few feet of safety. Drowning is preventable. Learn how:

#### *Stay safe in and around water*

Swimming lessons can significantly reduce the risk of drowning, but over half of U.S. adults have never taken a swimming lesson. Enrolling children in swimming lessons will improve their skill and comfort levels in water. Keep in mind that children who have had swimming lessons still need close and constant supervision when around water, even when a lifeguard is present.

#### *Supervise closely*

Designate a responsible adult to supervise closely and constantly when children are in or near water. Adults who supervise children should avoid distracting activities, such as reading, using the phone or consuming alcohol.

#### *Fully enclose home pools*

Home swimming pools need a four-sided fence at least four feet high that fully encloses the pool and separates it from the house. The fence needs a self-closing and self-latching gate. All children's toys should be removed from the pool when not in use.

### *Wear a life jacket*

Life jackets reduce the risk of drowning for people of all ages, regardless of their swimming abilities. Children should always wear a life jacket for activities occurring in or around natural water. Do not rely on air-filled or foam toys, as these are not safety devices. Additionally, “arm floaties” do not adequately protect young children from drowning and should never be the main floatation device.

### **UV Safety**

Just a few serious sunburns can increase the risk of developing skin cancer later in life. When you're outdoors, your skin needs protection from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. Follow these simple tips for protection from the sun:

- *Seek shade.* UV rays are most harmful during peak midday hours – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. – so it's best to be indoors during this time frame. If it isn't possible to be inside, seek shade under a tree or umbrella.
- *Cover up.* Clothing that covers the skin helps to protect against UV rays. Seeing as long shirts and pants aren't always practical in the summer heat, remember to double up on applying sunscreen or stay in the shade if you can't cover completely.
- *Get a hat.* Hats with a wide brim can shade the face, head, ears and neck. Baseball caps are good alternatives, but remember to apply sunscreen to your ears, neck, and any other exposed area.
- *Grab shades.* Sunglasses protect your eyes from UV rays. Without this protection, you may need cataracts later in life. Sunglasses should block as close to 100% of both UVA and UVB rays as possible.
- *Apply sunscreen.* Use sunscreen with a SPF of at least 15 or higher and with both UVA and UVB protection. For most effective protection, apply generously 30 minutes before going outdoors.

### *Beat the burn when sunbathing*

Sunbathing is not as popular as it once was because of the growing awareness that spending too much time in the sun may increase the risk of skin cancer. Serious sunburns, especially during childhood and adolescence, can also increase the chances of developing malignant melanoma. Unprotected skin can be damaged in as little as 15 minutes, but it can take up to 12 hours for skin to show the full effects of sun exposure. If you do sunbathe — at a beach, in the backyard or at a swimming pool — take precautions to protect yourself from overexposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays.

- Limit the time you spend in the sun.
- Do not overdo it when the weather starts to turn warm. Begin with 15 minutes a day, then slowly increase the time you spend in the sun.
- Use liberal amounts of suntan lotion with a high SPF, even on cloudy days.
- Wear dark glasses to protect your eyes.

### **Plastic Water Bottle Safety**

When summer temperatures soar, your car interior can rapidly heat up, reaching temperatures well over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. While the hazards of leaving a child or pet in a hot car may be obvious, there's an everyday item that people often overlook: the plastic water bottle. Leaving one of these in your car is problematic for numerous reasons:

- *Heat exposure.* High temperatures can cause chemicals from the plastic, such as BPA or phthalates, to leach into the water. Studies have shown that these chemicals can disrupt hormones, potentially leading to a host of health problems, including cancer and reproductive issues.

- *Bacteria growth.* Warm environments can promote the growth of bacteria inside your water bottle if left for too long, especially if it's been opened. Next time you take a sip, you might be ingesting more than just water – bacteria such as E. coli and salmonella can thrive in these conditions, posing serious health risk.
- *Plastic degradation.* Prolonged heat exposure can degrade plastic, potentially making it less safe for reuse and more likely to release harmful substances. A degraded water bottle may also release micro plastics into the water, which can be harmful if ingested.
- *Fire hazard.* In rare cases, the lens effect from a water bottle can focus sunlight onto a flammable surface, potentially causing a fire. While this scenario is rare, it's a risk that's easy to avoid.