Inside

the City

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Surviving Summer

If you want to make sure your day at the beach is just that -- a day at the beach and not a trip to the emergency room, you'll want to start with a good eye for warning signs of common summer bummers, including heat stroke, bee and wasp stings, and other health woes that occur more often during this season.

Heat Stroke

"Heat stroke is a big problem for workers, who are overdoing it on the job, and who can't say, 'I have to cool down and take a break,'" says Sue Leahy, president of the American Safety and Health Institute in New Paltz, N.Y. Older people, too, are susceptible, especially in a hot apartment with no air conditioning.

Stay ultra-hydrated to avoid heat stroke, she says. "Water is OK, but Gatorade and PowerAde with electrolytes are far better because they help replace salt and retain fluid," she says.

Knowing the warning signs is also key to staving off serious trouble, she says. "The first sign is cramping in the legs, and if that occurs, cool off and drink fluid until it goes away because if you don't, it can progress to heat exhaustion and then heat stroke."

Another peril of heat stroke is that as the body gets hotter and hotter; your blood gets thick and sludgy and makes you more likely to have a stroke.

Some of the signs of heat stroke include:

- Red, hot, dry skin
- Rapid pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Confusion
- Dizziness

"Let the body cool down naturally in early stages of heat exhaustion, but if you miss the signs and it progresses, put ice packs on the groin, armpits and neck where blood flows close to the surface," she says.

Other ways to cool the body include immersing the body in cool water, placing the person in a cool shower, or wrapping the person in a cool, wet blanket.

Where the Wild Things Are

"An ounce of prevention is really important when it comes to avoiding bug bites this summer," says toxicologist Stephen Pennisi, PhD, a.k.a. "Dr. Itch" and director of the Lanacane Itch Information Center in White Plains, N.Y.

Bees and wasps offer the greatest chance of acute reactions that can be serious, he says. "Many people already know that they are highly allergic are prepared with an EpiPen to avoid having to rush off to the ER," he says. An EpiPen injects epinephrine to prevent a severe allergic reaction. Signs of a severe, life-threatening reaction include dizziness due to a drop in blood pressure and an inability to breathe from swelling in the nose and throat.

But people who don't know yet that they are allergic can have a problem when they get stung. Here's how you know: Hives develop very quickly if you are allergic. "When bees or wasps sting, they go deep, and the venom gets into lungs and then the heart pumps more quickly, and within a minute, you will start feeling something, and within minutes, you will definitely know that you are having a reaction," Pennisi says.

People who are not allergic may only get a reaction where the sting took place, he says.

Make sure to get the stinger out quickly. Use a credit card or a blunt-edge object to try to scrape out the stinger. "If something like a credit card is not available, use your fingers because it's better than leaving it in and allowing more venom to be pumped in to your bloodstream," he says. Also, put ice on the sting to reduce the swelling that may occur later, he says. "This will also minimize any discomfort." Keep the area as clean as possible and applying topical anesthetic is also helpful to stave off itch and pain that can accompany a bite or sting.

Lyme Disease Lesson

To prevent tick bites, "wear appropriate clothing when you go out -- including light-colored clothing on legs, so you can spot any ticks quickly," Pennisi says. Insect repellant is also helpful. Apply a repellent containing DEET to clothes and exposed skin, and apply permethrin (which kills ticks on contact) to clothes.

"If you do find a tick on your skin, remember that it's more of a concern when they burrow into the skin and go deep enough to reach blood vessels and draw blood," he says.

"When getting the tick out, it's important to get as much

out as possible," he says, "Bring tweezers with you if you are going to be in a tick-infested area to ensure that you get as much as possible," he says. Lyme disease is caused by the bite of a tick infected with the bacteria that cause the disease. A few days to weeks after the tick bite, a "bull's-eye" rash may appear with fever, headache, and muscle or joint pain, or a flu-like illness. It is most common during the late spring and summer months in the U.S. and occurs mostly in the north-eastern and upper Midwest states. You may want to keep the tick to show it to your doctor, since certain ticks are more likely to carry the bacteria that causes Lyme disease, Pennisi says.

Water Woes

With kids around water, you always worry about drowning. "Never leave kids unattended around any water, and make sure there's adult supervision from an adult who knows how to swim," Salerno says. Most of us probably recall being told that you can drown if you go into the water too soon after eating. The truth is that "when you are digesting food, there's less blood flow in your body and this takes away from strength, so if you had to really use your strength for undertow, you may have a problem," Leahy says. The best bet is to wait a half an hour after you eat before getting back in the water.

Barbecue

What's a summer without a barbecue? To make sure that your meal goes off without an emergency trip to the restroom or the ER, make sure that mayonnaise and salads with mayonnaise stay out of the sun. "If these food items are brought from refrigerator directly to table, help yourself, but don't let them sit out more than 15 minutes in the hot sun," Leahy says. "Hamburgers should be cooked thoroughly and not be pink inside."

Rules to Live By

"When you are sweating too much, it's time to come out of the sun," she says. I wouldn't do anything in the hot sun for longer than 15 or 20 minutes at a clip because the body can lose a significant amount of water content from sweating -- setting you up for heat stroke." It's not just heat that makes summer fun problematic, she says. "Cold is big problem when kids are out swimming and have been in the water so long that their lips are blue, they are shivering, and their body temperature has dropped." Make them warm back up to 98.6 before they go back in, no matter how much they plead. "All kids want to do is have fun, so a parent has to be a parent and make sure that they warm up."

Children pose a special challenge during the summer, says Denise Salerno, MD, an associate professor of pediatrics at Temple University in Philadelphia.

No matter what the potential peril is, "the key is being prepared. Travel with a little first aid kit and make sure you have it where it's readily available to save trips to the ER," she says. http://www.webmd.com/women/features/surviving-summer

Have a Good Pic??
Have an idea for article??

Human Resources enjoys showcasing our employees at work throughout the City. In order to highlight the diversity of work performed (and scenery) within the City, we need your help! **Please** submit your photos, articles, and ideas!

Submissions will be continually accepted…you may submit photos or articles to our office or submit electronically by emailing to hr@ashland-ohio.com.

Upcoming Events

July 2-5	**Balloonfest**
July 4	**Independence Day!**
July 8	**Safety Committee 1:00pm**
July 10	**Fun, Fabulous Friday**
July 11	**Dream Cruise Car Show**
July 14	**Lunchbox Leadership 12:00pm**
Jul 14-18	**Ashland Chautauqua**
July 17	**Fun, Fabulous Friday**
July 24	**Fun, Fabulous Friday**
Aug 7	**Fun, Fabulous Friday**
Aug 11	**Lunchbox Leadership 12:00pm**
Aug 12	**Safety Committee 1:00pm**
Aug 15	**Lincoln Highway Car Show**

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