

Staying Safe in the Summer Sun

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Jeff Smith shares some tips for readers on how to stay safe in the hot summer weather.

BRUNSWICK, WI - It's hard to believe summer is more than halfway over. Like so many others, I've had a busy summer visiting the local fairs in the region, enjoying the outdoors and spending time with friends and family.

Although back-to-school commercials are starting to appear on our TVs, there are still many ways to enjoy the warm weather and summer fun with your family – just be sure to stay safe!

August is one of the hottest months of the year. Warm temperatures combined with high humidity levels can pose a risk of heat-related illness and death. There are ways to stay cool and avoid serious illness: drink plenty of water and watch your local weather forecast to stay informed about extreme heat events. Community spots, like libraries or malls, have air conditioning, to help you stay cool.

Some populations are more at-risk from serious illness, including young children and people 65 years or older. It's important to check in on neighbors and loved ones to make sure they are informed and safe. Also, beware of hot cars; never leave a person or pet in a parked car, even for a short time. According to the Department of Health Services, "on an 80 degree day, the temperature inside a car can reach 100 degrees in less than 10 minutes."

If you're spending extended periods of time outdoors, be sure to know the symptoms indicating serious illness. If you are experiencing dizziness, headache, muscle cramps, weakness, nausea or vomiting, get cool or get help immediately. Call 911 if you have hot, dry skin, chest pains, shortness of breath, confusion or are with someone who is unconscious.

These tips are important to remember and share with others to stay safe and enjoy all that summer has to offer!

We're fortunate, especially here in western Wisconsin, to have access to so many waterways. Whether you're boating, fishing or swimming, it's critical you know how to stay safe. Make sure you have a swimming buddy or a boat float plan so at least one person knows when you plan to be back.

Here are some recommendations to keep in mind if you're on a boat: ensure each passenger has a personal floatation device that properly fits; check the weather of your route; and bring along a first aid kit in case of emergencies. Also, stay hydrated and avoid alcohol while operating a watercraft.

The Department of Natural Resources has additional guidance on ways to stay safe on the water. You can call DNR Center Staff toll-free at 1-888-936-7463) between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. for more information.

During the summer, there are a number of chances to interact with wildlife, animals (and, unfortunately, pests) while you're on a hike, or visiting a petting zoo or local fair. Always wash your hands after interacting with animals to avoid the spread of disease, like salmonella or rabies.

Insect repellents are useful to protect yourself against biting insects and ticks that transmit disease, such as Lyme Disease. To use repellent safely, apply it sparingly and only to exposed skin or clothing. Do not apply repellents to eyelids, lips or wounded skin; also, do not spray repellents in a confined space, like a car or tent. Visit www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/environmental/repellents for more information about selecting a repellent and additional precautionary measures.



Lastly, always be prepared for severe weather during the summer when we can see thunderstorms, tornadoes and flooding. Be alert and take general preparedness measures now so you are ready in the event of a severe weather event.



One thing you can do today is make a disaster kit with basic items that household members may need in the event of a disaster. Food and water should last for at least three days. Visit ready.gov/kit for steps to create your disaster kit and more information on how to be prepared.

Wisconsin summers are a wonderful time with limitless activities your whole family can enjoy. While you're outdoors, spending time in the sun before kids are back in school, just remember to stay safe and be prepared. Enjoy the many memories you make during the rest of the summer!

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