



A Safe Summer? Alpha-Bet on It!



Seasonal Safety Tips from A to Z

Staying alert to safety may make your summer much more pleasant and enjoyable. With children on summer vacation and adults taking time off, summer is ideal for leaving stress behind. But even fun in the sun comes with its share of cautions and consequences. Keep your vacation plans letter-perfect by following these alphabetical safety tips:

Amusement parks are popular summer destinations, especially for families with children. Haunted houses and roller coasters are scary enough without the terror of losing your kids. The National Safety Council suggests parents carry photos of their children, select a meeting place ahead of time in case someone gets lost, instruct children to go to a park employee if they are in trouble, and make sure kids know their parents' names. Teach children never to go with a stranger who is trying to lure them away.

Bicycle helmets can prevent up to 88 percent of cyclists' brain injuries, says the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute. Helmets should be positioned correctly and should fit snugly with the straps properly buckled. Parents should lead by example and insist that kids wear helmets for bicycling, skateboarding and in-line skating.

Cookouts and picnics can be carefree as long as you handle food properly. Pack well-wrapped food in an insulated cooler. Keep your cooler in the shade with the lid on. When barbecuing, cook burgers until they're no longer pink in the center, and cook poultry until the juices run clear from the thickest part of the meat. Eat everything within a two-hour time period and return leftovers to the cooler.

Driver fatigue. To stay alert during a summer excursion:

- Get enough rest the day before.
- Don't drive alone.
- Never start a trip late in the day. Avoid driving at night.
- Do the driving yourself instead of using cruise control.
- Keep your car's temperature cool.
- Play the radio.
- Stop every two hours to stretch your legs.



Electrolyte-rich sports drinks replace salt and minerals lost during heavy sweating, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. During hot weather, you'll need to drink more liquid than your thirst indicates. This is especially true for children and senior citizens.

Fido feels the summer heat just like his owners do. It's crucial to provide extra water for your pets on hot days. Dogs drink two to three times their normal amount of water during the summer. Also, don't leave your dog in a parked car. A car parked in the sun can quickly get to unbearable temperatures. A three-inch crack in the window doesn't provide enough circulation.

Grilling burgers is fun, but do so safely, cautions the National Fire Protection Association. Keep your grill far from anything that can burn – your home, car, dry vegetation, kids and pets. Run cool water over a burn for 10 to 15 minutes. Don't rub butter on a burn because it can seal in the heat and further damage the tissue. Serious burns should receive medical attention.

Heat stroke and heat exhaustion are serious hot-weather emergencies. According to the CDC, warning signs include high body temperature, red skin with no sweating, rapid pulse, headache, nausea or confusion. If you see these signs, call for medical assistance and cool the victim by moving him or her into the shade. Bathe the victim with cold water. Heat exhaustion – though less severe – can lead to heat stroke. Warning signs include heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, weakness, headache, nausea or fainting. Help the victim cool down and seek medical attention if symptoms become worse.



Insects can be a real summer buzz kill. To keep mosquitoes away, use insect repellent and light citronella candles. Cover food at outdoor events to avoid attracting bees and wasps.

Just say no to drinking and driving. Even one or two drinks can affect how you drive. Choose a designated driver and make sure that person sticks to non-alcoholic beverages. If you're the driver and drink alcohol, surrender your keys to a sober friend or call a taxi.

Kee cool on hot days by limiting exertion and staying inside. Be sure those at high risk of heat-related illness – children and senior citizens – follow your lead.

Learn CPR. Parents and caregivers should be trained in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), especially if summer plans include swimming. The National Safety Council's First Aid Institute offers CPR training; call (800) 621-6244 for more information.

Motion sickness causes vomiting, cold sweats, hyperventilation and headaches. Follow these tips to avoid motion sickness:

- Avoid eating heavy meals for at least two hours before traveling.
- Eat light, easily digestible foods like crackers, bread and canned fruit.
- Don't read in a car, plane, train or boat when it's moving.
- Sit in the front seat of a car and focus your eyes on the horizon.



Natural habitats should be kept natural – which means don't litter when visiting parks or camping. Leave your campsite cleaner than you found it. Dispose of garbage in the proper receptacle, especially non-biodegradable items, cigarette butts, polystyrene, aluminum foil, cans, and disposable diapers.

Ozone. Ground-level ozone is a harmful pollutant that forms when hydrocarbon emissions react with sunlight. Some cities have Ozone Action Days to alert residents to dangerous conditions on hot days with little to no wind. To reduce ozone on those days:

- Don't mow the lawn.
- Avoid idling your car unnecessarily.
- Don't refuel your vehicle or lawn mower. Or do so after dark.
- Walk, bike, carpool or use public transportation.

Playgrounds are great fun but can pose safety hazards. Check the surface under the equipment to ensure it can absorb a fall. Wood chips are acceptable but concrete is not. Equipment should be secure and swings should be made of rubber or canvas. To avoid slipping, never use wet playground equipment. Don't let children wear clothes with drawstrings or loose straps, which can catch and cause strangulation.

Quiz your kids on stranger safety. For example, children should not talk to unfamiliar adults when they're at a park. Teach kids to yell or go to a safe spot, such as a friend's house or nearby store, when they feel they're in danger.

Rental cars are convenient, but you need to get acquainted with them. Take note of the instrument locations. Ride around the parking lot before driving in traffic. Note the amount of play in the steering wheel and the feel of the brakes. To avoid confusion, rent a car similar to your own.

Swim safely. Drowning is the second-leading cause of injury-related death for children, according to the CDC. Teach children to swim, and never allow them to swim unsupervised. Kids should obey rules such as: swim with a buddy, don't dive into unfamiliar water, and never push or jump on others.

Tick bites can lead to Lyme disease, which starts with a rash or flu-like symptoms. When in tick-infested woods and fields, use an insect repellent that contains deet, says the Chemical Specialties Manufacturers Association. Wear light-colored clothing and tuck pant legs into socks and your shirt into your pants. After exposure, inspect your entire body for ticks – some are as small as a pinhead. Remove ticks with tweezers and treat any bites with a topical antibiotic.

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Basking in the sun is dangerous because of the depleting ozone layer. Heed the daily UV Index, often reported by the local news, and cover up as necessary. Wear a wide-brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirt, pants and sunglasses. Apply sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15. Limit your sun exposure from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Verify your kids' – and your own – knowledge of what poison ivy, oak and sumac look like. Learn which plants to avoid.

Water that's contaminated can lead to traveler's diarrhea, a common affliction in countries with poor sanitation. Vacationers in these areas should drink bottled water or water that's been boiled.

Exercise helps you look and feel better. Ease into a program and set reasonable goals. A well-rounded workout addresses five fitness areas: muscle strength, muscle endurance, flexibility, weight control and cardiovascular endurance.

Yard maintenance poses safety hazards, especially with children around. Gardeners should allow pesticides to dry before letting anyone in the yard. Also, keep the kids inside while you're mowing to avoid injuries from flying debris.

Zoom! Summer can go by in the blink of an eye. In between all of your road trips and roller coaster rides, take time to relax and enjoy the season. Make your vacation a memorable one for all the right reasons!

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