

A publication of the

## PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



### Summertime and the living is . . . *dangerous to your health?*

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM SUMMER HEALTH HAZARDS



Summertime in Florida means hot weather, trips to the beach or park, swimming, picnics, cookouts, and lots of recreation and relaxing. Most of us look forward to these typical summer activities. Without a few simple precautions, however, fun and relaxation can turn into disaster. Here are a few suggestions for summertime safety.

#### Protect Yourself from Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is one of the most preventable cancers of all. The sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays appear to be the most important environmental factor in the progression of skin cancer. That makes skin cancer a largely preventable disease when sun protection measures against UV rays are used consistently. The main objective is to prevent sunburn.

To protect yourself:

- ◆ Seek shade under a tree umbrella or shelter.
- ◆ Cover-up with light-weight clothing.
- ◆ Wear a hat to protect your face, scalp, ears, and neck.
- ◆ Apply sunscreen liberally with at least a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15.
- ◆ Wear sunglasses that deter UV rays which can cause cataracts.
- ◆ Avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. (even on cloudy days).
- ◆ Get regular screenings for skin cancer.

#### Make Food Safety a Priority

Following a few simple rules will help you avoid foodborne illnesses.

Wash, wash, wash your hands!—Always

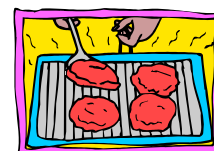
wash your hands with hot, soapy water before and after handling food.

Marinating—When marinating for long periods of time, it is important to keep the marinating foods refrigerated. Don't use sauce that was used to marinate raw meat or poultry on other already cooked food. Boil used marinade sauce before applying to cooked food.

Hot! Hot! Hot!—When grilling foods, pre-heat the coals on your grill for 20—30 minutes or until the coals are lightly coated with ash.

Temperature gauge— Use a meat thermometer to insure that food reaches a safe internal temperature:

- ◆ Hamburgers and ground poultry should be cooked to 160° F.
- ◆ Poultry parts: 170° F.
- ◆ Roasts, steaks and other large cuts of beef: 145° F (rare) and 160° F (medium).
- ◆ Fish — should be cooked until the meat is opaque and flakes easily.



Stay away from that same old plate—

When taking foods off the grill, do not put cooked food items back on the same plate that previously held raw food.

Coolers and refrigeration— A full cooler will maintain its cold temperatures longer (*continued on back*)

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than one partially filled, so it is important to pack plenty of extra ice or freezer packs to insure a constant cold temperature.

## Avoid Mosquito Bites to Avoid Infection

We know that human illness from West Nile Virus begins with a mosquito bite. Although this illness is relatively rare, Florida had 28 cases in 2002. In warm weather, mosquitoes are active and protection from mosquito bites even more important. Here's what you need to do:



- ◆ Avoid outdoor activities when mosquitoes are active, especially at dusk and dawn.
- ◆ When you are outdoors during these times, cover-up by wearing shoes, socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt. Additional protection can be obtained by applying repellent directly to clothing.
- ◆ For adults and children older than two-months of age, the best protection is achieved by using mosquito repellent containing 30 percent DEET according to manufacturer's directions. For children less than two-months, DEET is not recommended; use protective clothing and cover with mosquito netting.
- ◆ Eliminate stagnant water in bird-baths, ponds, and other receptacles in which mosquitoes might breed by emptying or changing.



## Keep Tetanus Shots Current

Tetanus is an acute, often fatal disease caused by an organism that is widely distributed in soil and in animal feces, and it usually enters the body through a wound. During the summer, when children and adults are barefoot more often and involved in outside activities, injuries involving a wound are possible.

To prevent tetanus contamination to a wound, you should have a tetanus shot and routine boosters at least every 10 years. If you sustain a wound and it's been more than 5 years since your last tetanus shot, you should get a tetanus booster to be safe.

Dr. Julia Gill, PinCHD epidemiologist, says, "Don't let the lazy, hazy days of summer catch you off guard. Take precautions to protect yourself from summer hazards."

Information for this article taken from Florida Department of Health press releases and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

## Physical Activity a Pain Reliever for Arthritis



Arthritis encompasses over 100 diseases and conditions that affect joints, surrounding tissues, and/or connective tissues. These diseases include rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, fibromyalgia, lupus, gout, bursitis, rheumatic fever, and juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. They are a leading cause of disability among adults in the United States and affect approximately 70 million adults.

The Florida Department of Health encourages people with arthritis to become more physically active to help relieve pain.

"Exercise is an important part of arthritis self-management," said DOH Secretary John O. Agwunobi, M.D. M.B.A. "Working with your physician to develop an appropriate exercise program can help in developing or maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle."

The Surgeon General's 1996 *Report on Physical Activity and Health* concluded that programs of regular moderate aerobic activity or resistance training relieve symptoms and improve function among people with rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis. Specific benefits of regular physical activity of moderate intensity are improvements in muscle strength, endurance, flexibility, function, psychosocial status, and cardiovascular health and fitness.

- ◆ A person with arthritis should strive for a goal of 30 minutes of physical activity three or more days a week.
- ◆ If needed, a person can build up to the 30-minute goal or break it up into 10-minute sessions.
- ◆ Walking, swimming, and biking are particularly good activities for people with arthritis.
- ◆ Everyday activities such as gardening and dancing are also beneficial — move for your health!

*(Information condensed from a DOH press release 5/16/03)*

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