



Summer Safety

*"He makes me to lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters, He restores my soul"* Psalm 23:2-3



As we end our long Wisconsin hibernation, memories of leisurely times with family and friends beckon us to the great outdoors. But before you don your bathing suit or hit the trails, brush up on summer safety tips.

SUNBURN

Remember to limit sun exposure, wear protective clothing and use sunscreen. Water-resistant sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher should be applied before going outdoors and reapplied at least every two hours AND after swimming or heavy perspiration. Wearing a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses helps to protect the sensitive skin around the eyes and may reduce the long-term risk of developing cataracts. Remember that some medications can increase sensitivity to the sun. Ask your health care provider about any medications you may be taking which could cause increased sensitivity to the sun and don't forget about over the counter medications. If you do get a sunburn, apply a cold compress to the area. If you don't have that, a pack of frozen vegetables will work. Be on the lookout for moles that change color or size, bleed, or have an irregular, spreading edge - all potential signs of skin cancer. Seek medical attention if you notice any of these changes.

INSECT BITES

To protect yourself from insect bites, wear light-colored clothing and avoid scented soaps and perfumes. Use insect repellent sparingly. They are safest if rubbed or sprayed on clothing. Insect repellent should not be used on babies, and repellent used on children should not contain more than 10 percent DEET. After applying insect repellent be sure to wash your hands. If you are stung by a bee, remove the stinger by scraping the stinger with a side-to-side motion with a credit card or fingernail and then washing the area with soap and water. Pulling, pinching or squeezing the stinger or using tweezers may push more venom into the skin. For any bug bite or sting, a cold compress can lessen the sting. Watch for signs of an allergic reaction to stings which typically happen within the first few hours. Symptoms of an allergic reaction include hives, itching, rash, difficulty breathing or swelling in the face or an area other than where the sting occurred. Seek immediate emergency medical attention for any of these symptoms.

HEAT ILLNESS

People ages 65 and older and young children are especially vulnerable to heat illness. Certain health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease, as well as alcohol intake also increase a person's risk for heat illness. In heat, the body responds by increasing blood flow to the skin and by sweating. Evaporating sweat carries away large amounts of heat from the skin surface, allowing your body to maintain a normal temperature. Very hot weather increases the effort needed to maintain a normal body temperature. In addition, high humidity can compound stress, because it interferes with the process of evaporation. Mild symptoms of heat illness include thirst, fatigue, and cramps in the legs or abdomen. Serious heat-related symptoms include dizziness, headaches, nausea, rapid heart beat, vomiting and decreased alertness. Carry a water bottle and drink plenty of non-caffeinated fluids and don't push your limits. Eat healthy, lighter meals with plenty of fruits, salads and vegetables. Avoid hot, heavy meals and use the oven sparingly. Air conditioning is the No. 1 protective factor against heat illness. If you don't have air conditioning, spend time in public facilities such as libraries and malls that have air conditioning. (Please catch up on your reading and exercise while you are there as well). If you see someone experiencing heat illness, have the person lie down in a cool place and elevate the legs. Use water, wet towels and fanning to keep the person cool until emergency help arrives.

SPIRITUAL SAFETY

As always, stay in close contact with family and friends for well-being. Take time to reflect on the beauty of God's creation and what He is doing in your life. He is our reason for living and being a part of this family of believers. Sing some praise songs or read some of the Psalms while sitting outside under a tree and listen to the birds sing their own praises to the Lord.

Have a joyful and safe summer!

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