



# Summer Safety



June 2012

**Drink plenty of water.** Even if you don't feel thirsty, the heat will make you sweat out all the fluids you take in. If you become dehydrated, you can get sick and actually suffer heat stroke. Drink all of the water you can. Gatorade is also good to drink but avoid coffee, soda, energy drinks and alcohol as these beverages will actually dehydrate you.



**Keep your skin covered.** The sun can burn your skin without you even knowing it! Get a suntan lotion that has a strong SPF and apply it before you go out in the sun. Be sure to re-apply after swimming or at least once an hour. Wear a hat that can protect the face and neck as well. Remember to wear sun glasses, your eyes need protection too.

**Plan outdoor activities for the cooler parts of the day.** Avoid strenuous physical activities or reschedule them for the coolest part of the day, usually the early morning. If you are going to the beach or doing something outside that requires you to exert yourself take breaks so you can give your body the rest it needs to re-energize itself. If you are just sitting outside to enjoy some fresh air try to find a spot that is protected by shade.

Stay indoors as much as possible. Spend time in an air-conditioned place if possible; resting for just two hours in air conditioning can significantly reduce heat-related illnesses.

Wear clothes that are light colored and loose fitting.

**Eat light meals.** Avoid high-protein foods because they increase metabolic heat. Light, well-balanced small meals will fill you up easily. Experiment with different kinds of salads.

**Make sure your children stay safe too!** Never leave a child unattended in a car. Not even for a few minutes! A car in the sun can get too hot for children. Also be aware of "hot spots" on your child's car seat that may burn their tender skin. You may want to cover those areas with a towel to keep them cooler.

Remember to watch children around any kind of water. It only takes 2" of water for a toddler to drown. If you have a pool, put up a fence with a locking gate or place a cover on the pool. Pool alarms are available and will alert you to any disturbance in the water. Empty all water from baby pools after every use!



**Remember pet safety.** Leave your pets at home! Even days that seem mild to humans are too hot for a pet to be locked in a car. Leaving a window down an inch or two is not enough to provide a safe environment for your pet. Fifteen minutes in a hot car is enough for animal body temperatures to go from normal to deadly.

If your pets stay outside, be sure to keep plenty of cool water available for them. Provide a shady area where they can get out of the sun and cool off.

**Avoid mosquitoes.** The most effective way to eliminate mosquitoes around your home is to tip and toss standing water where mosquitoes lay their eggs. Common problem areas and ways to correct them are:

Is there a health topic you want to know more about? For more information about fitness, education and nutrition, or other health programs, contact Grace Keith, Health Educator, 850.926.0400 x. 215 or Grace\_Keith@doh.state.fl.us

Roof gutters - clean out leaves and debris blocking and holding water.  
 Discarded cans and containers - remove, store inside or turn upside down.  
 Old tires - store tires where they will not collect rainwater.  
 Bird baths - clean and change the water every five to seven days.  
 Wading pools - change water regularly and turn over when not in use.  
 Drainage ditches - keep open and free from debris that holds water.  
 Canoes and boats - cover with a tight-fitting tarp or turn upside down.  
 Tarps on woodpiles or garden equipment - remove sagging areas.  
 Ornamental ponds - stock with small fish.  
 Puddles and wet or soggy areas - drain or backfill.



To avoid mosquito bites, make sure that all window and door screens fit tightly and are free of holes that mosquitoes can use to enter the house. When outside, wear light-colored clothing with long sleeves and long pants. Use insect repellent indicated for mosquitoes and follow the label instructions.



**Avoid Rabies.** The long summer days bring out other critters in addition to mosquitoes. Enjoy natural wildlife from a distance. Wild animals can carry rabies, a virus that attacks the nervous system and can kill any mammal, including humans. Pet owners also are reminded to have pets vaccinated every year - it's the law.

The Health Department cautions that people should avoid contact with unfamiliar pets, stray animals and all wildlife. Because the rabies virus is shed in the saliva of sick animals, health officials caution that any animal bite should be taken seriously. *Anyone bitten by an animal, wild or domestic, should wash the wound immediately and notify a physician, the Health Department or Animal Control.*

Likewise, residents should immediately contact a veterinarian or Animal Control if their pet is bitten by a wild animal. Health officials recommend the following steps to prevent families and pets from exposure to rabies:  
 Vaccinate all cats, dogs and ferrets against rabies and keep the vaccination current.

- Avoid contact** with wild animals, stray cats and stray dogs.
- Do not feed** wild animals, stray cats and stray dogs.
- Report stray animals to Animal Control.
- Eliminate outdoor food sources around the home.
- Keep pets confined to your property or walk them on a leash.



The next Hands-only CPR class is on Thursday, June 21, 7-9 p.m. at the Health Department. The course is endorsed by the American Safety and Health Institute. Call 926-0400, ext. 215 for more information or to register for a class. The cost is \$25.00 per person.

The Wakulla County Health Department now has a Service Provider Kiosk to help you find who and what you are looking for. The kiosk is located in the lobby of the Health Department, which is open Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

You can search sites such as 211Big Bend, Whole Child Leon, Florida Department of Children and Families and Wakulla County Coalition for Youth Resource Directory. Many providers are local and have sliding scales for those families in crisis. You can find all types of services from daily needs to emergency assistance. This service is also very helpful in the event that you have just moved into the area. The kiosk and electronic referral system were made possible through a grant sponsored by the Blue Foundation of Florida. There is no charge to use the kiosk.

