

WATCH OUT for These Common Summertime DANGERS

by Stan O'Dell

Summertime is a lot of fun, but it is not without its dangers. The warm weather means spending more time outdoors, and that can expose you and your family to a number of dangers.

Being away from those dangers is half the battle. If you know what to watch out for, you can avoid the common problems associated with summer fun. Here's a look at some of the most common summertime dangers and how you can avoid them.

SUNBURN

Whether it is the result of falling asleep on the lounge chair, spending too much time at the beach, or just forgetting your sunscreen, sunburn is a serious risk on any summer day. While many people think of sunburn as no big deal, the damage it does to your skin should not be taken lightly.

A single serious sunburn can increase your chances of developing skin cancer, and that could have life-changing implications. Even if cancer is not the end result, continued sun damage will make you look older than your years and could make wrinkles more pronounced as you age.

Carrying a small bottle of sunscreen in your purse or pocket is one of the best ways to protect yourself. Do not forget to apply sunscreen to your face as well and reapply it throughout the day.

Also remember that it is possible to get a sunburn even on cloudy days. The damaging UV rays of the sun will make their way through the clouds, so don't skip the sunscreen just because you can't see the sun.



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SWIMMING POOL MISHAPS

Going to the pool is lots of fun, but you need to put safety first. Swimming pool mishaps are all too common in the warmer months, and you do not want to take chances around the water.

If you do not know how to swim, invest in swimming lessons before you head to the pool. Even if you never plan to leave the shallow end, you will have more confidence if you at least know how to dog paddle. You might even find that swimming comes naturally and take up a new sport.

Even if you are an expert swimmer, horseplay around the pool is a big no-no. Always insist that your kids observe proper safety precautions and never allow them to run around the pool deck.

If you plan to include diving in your summer fun, make sure you know the depth of the water and always observe proper safety precautions before diving into the water.



GRILLING DANGERS

A backyard barbecue is one of the chief joys of summer, but it is important to stay safe around the grill. Whether you use charcoal or gas to grill up your hot dogs, hamburgers, and other summertime favorites, safety should be your No. 1 consideration.

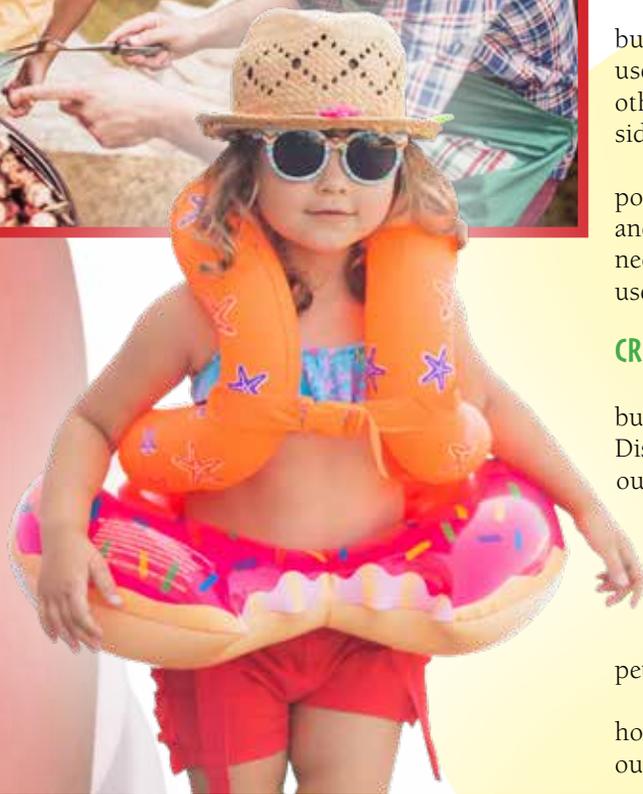
Never use the grill in an enclosed space like a garage or porch. Make sure the grill is located well away from buildings and anything else that could catch fire. Double-check the connections on your gas grill and empty the grease tray before every use - and never store the extra propane tanks indoors.

CREEPY CRAWLIES

Ticks, mosquitoes, and other summer pests are disgusting, but they can be dangerous as well. West Nile Virus and Lyme Disease are common threats, and an infection could lead to serious and lifelong health consequences.

If you are hosting a backyard barbecue or other celebration, make sure there is a citronella candle on every table to ward off mosquitoes. Keep a supply of bug spray around, including a few extra bottles for your guests. Make sure you apply insect repellent each time you go out, and check your pets - and yourself - for ticks every time you go back indoors.

Summer safety is everyone's responsibility. Whether you are hosting your legendary Memorial Day barbecue or just hanging out by the pool, you will want to do it safely. ■



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