



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department
“Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities”

For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 8409
2012 E. Preston Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858, www.cmdhd.org

To: Senior Newspaper
From: Shelli Wolfe, Health Promotion & Preparedness
Central Michigan District Health Department
RE: Summer Fun and Safety
Release Date: August 2010

SUMMER FUN AND SAFETY FOR ALL AGES

Summertime is here and it is a time of fellowship with family and friends. With summer in full swing, many people enjoy extra time spent outdoors. A little extra planning can help reduce the risk for common sun and food-related illnesses.

Sun Safety

Sunburn, skin cancers, and overheating are largely preventable when sun protection is practiced early and consistently. You may wonder how you can protect yourself from the negative effects of the sun. Sun protection habits include: Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher, seek the shade between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when the sun is strongest, and cover your skin with clothing, including a broad-brimmed hat and UV-blocking sunglasses.

Too much heat on summer days can be dangerous for more than our skin and overheating can be dangerous to our bodies. Normally our body’s built-in cooling system, sweating, helps keep us cool. Sometimes our ability to cool ourselves gets overloaded. When this happens, we can develop heat exhaustion or heat stroke. The very young, the very old, and people that suffer from heart disease are most susceptible to overheating.

Heat exhaustion, a mild form of heat-related illness, can develop over several days of high temperatures and dehydration. *Heat stroke* is the most serious form of heat-related illness

and occurs when our body becomes unable to control its temperature. Our body temperature can increase rapidly and may rise to 106°F or more within minutes, resulting in death or permanent disability if not treated

While these heat-related illnesses can be frightening, they are entirely preventable by remembering the following tips: Drink plenty of cool fluids (avoiding those fluids that contain caffeine, alcohol, or large amounts of sugar), stay in shady or air conditioned areas, take cool showers or baths, wear light-weight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing, limit outdoor activities to morning and evening, and rest often.

Food Safety

As the weather gets warmer, more people head outside for picnics and parties. Unfortunately, people are not the only ones who enjoy the summer sun. Bacteria such as Salmonella and E. coli thrive in the warm temperatures and moist environments that the summer often provides. Many foods can contain these bacteria, and can result in food borne illness in those who unknowingly consume them.

When grilling or barbecuing, it is important to keep raw meats separate from cooked meats or other ready-to-eat foods. The bacteria that can often be present in raw meats are killed in the cooking process, so use a clean plate for the meat once it has been cooked. Also be sure to wash utensils and cutting boards often with hot water and soap. When packing a cooler, wrap raw meats well and try to keep them separated from anything that will not be cooked before being eaten.

Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot! This rule is easy enough to remember, but if not followed it can be a major cause of food borne illness. Don't leave foods out for longer than 2 hours. Refrigerate or cool leftovers as soon as possible after eating them in order to prevent bacterial growth. Many people think only about egg products or raw meat when thinking about

foods that can lead to food borne illness. Fruits and vegetables, however, can just as easily contain harmful bacteria. Make sure to rinse fruits and vegetables well before eating, and keep them in a cool place.

Make sure that there is a safe source of drinking water nearby when going camping or having a picnic. If you cannot verify that a source is safe, make sure to pack clean water. If you experience symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, cramps, or diarrhea, it is very important to stay hydrated and seek medical attention.

Finally, the most important thing to remember is to wash hands well and often. This step can be the most crucial in preventing the spread of bacteria and disease. Use hot water and soap and scrub hands for at least 20 seconds to make sure that they are clean.

Summertime is a time for fun in the sun. Overexposure to the sun and food poisoning could put a damper on otherwise enjoyable outings. For more information about these and other health topics, visit the Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov or our website www.cmdhd.org.

This article has been brought to you by the Central Michigan District Health Department serving the residents of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon counties.

###