

"Giving Voice to Those Seldom Heard"

Summer Alert

This Medical Update provides information on conditions that may cause serious injuries and in some cases death. These conditions have resulted in cases that are reported to our office during the summer season. Our hope is that this Summer Alert will be a reminder to you to be aware, informed, and able to avoid potential problems.

INSECTS

- Check buildings for holes in screens and other spots where insects can get in.
- Apply insect repellents, when possible, before going outside.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants tucked into socks, and closed shoes when in woods or grassy areas.
- Check for ticks after being outdoors.
- Shower as soon as possible after coming indoors. Ticks take several hours to attach themselves to the skin; in the meantime, they can be washed away.
- For more on prevention and free posters see: [Minnesota Department of Health | Tickborne Diseases](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/tickborne/index.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/tickborne/index.html>)
- Refer to the [Insect Sting Alert \[PDF\]](#).

HEAT

- Check the electrical capacity of the facility to evaluate whether air conditioning can be added.
- For the elderly, when traveling, plan rest stops to allow for necessary fluid intake.
- Refer to the [Heat Stroke Alert \[PDF\]](#).
- For additional information, please see the [Centers for Disease Control | Extreme Heat resources](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/index.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/index.html>) for "Hot Weather Tips," podcasts, infographics, Tweetable tips, PSAs, videos, and more.
- Please see the [Minnesota Department of Health's Extreme Heat Toolkit \[PDF\]](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/climate/docs/mnextremeheattoolkit.pdf) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/climate/docs/mnextremeheattoolkit.pdf>) for Minnesota maps and Minnesota-specific information.

SUMMER FIRE SAFETY

- Make sure your grill is in good working condition and make sure you use it safely. Only use your grill outside. Always open the grill lid before lighting. Do not add lighter fluid to an already lit fire. Keep a three-foot safety zone around the grill. Use long handled utensils to keep your hands and arms away from the heat.
- Keep an eye on your grill, fire pit, or patio torches. Never leave any of them unattended.
- Place the coals from your grill in a metal can with a lid after they have cooled.
- Build campfires at least 15 feet away from tent walls, shrubs or other materials that burn.
- These recommendations and free poster type handouts are available from the [U.S. Fire Administration outreach materials](https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/summer.html) (<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/summer.html>)

WATER SAFETY

- Refer to the [Water Safety Alert \[PDF\]](#).
- Provide training on policies for all staff prior to the swimming season.
- Know what hazards to look for in the specific water environments you'll be in, whether it's the beach, water park, pool, river or lake.
- Review individual abuse prevention plans prior to outings.
- Know each individual's vulnerabilities and provide adequate supervision to ensure the safety of everyone.

AIR QUALITY INDEX (AQI)

- An Air Quality Index value of 101 to 150 is "considered unhealthy for sensitive groups: The elderly, children, and people with lung disease are vulnerable to the effects of ozone pollution; and the elderly, children and those with heart and lung disease are at risk from particulate matter. These groups should reduce their exertion outdoors." From <https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2018/06/26/air-quality-alerts-pollution>
- For additional information and to sign up for e-mail air pollution alerts, please see the [Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's website](https://www.pca.state.mn.us/air/current-air-quality) (<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/air/current-air-quality>)

SUN

- Some medications, such as antipsychotic medications and antibiotics, put clients at a higher risk for sunburn.
- Reduce exposure to the sun with umbrellas, hats, long-sleeved, light weight summer clothing, etc.
- Protect eyes with sunglasses that are labeled to block out 99 to 100% of both UVA and UVB radiation.
- Consider limiting or avoiding time in the sun, especially between the hours of 10 AM and 2 PM, when the sun's rays are most intense. Consider scheduling certain outdoor activities in the early morning or late afternoon.
- Make available Broad Spectrum sunscreens with SPF values of 15 or higher regularly and as directed even when it is cloudy.
- Sunscreen expiration dates - FDA regulates sunscreens to ensure they meet safety and effectiveness standards. FDA regulations require all sunscreens and other nonprescription drugs to have an expiration date **unless stability testing conducted by the manufacturer has shown that the product will remain stable for at least three years.** - That means, a sunscreen product that doesn't have an expiration date should be considered expired three years after purchase. Expired sunscreens should be discarded because there is no assurance that they remain safe and fully effective.
- Tips for Applying Sunscreen
 - Apply the recommended amount – a golf-ball sized amount or about one ounce – evenly to all uncovered skin, especially your lips, nose, ears, neck, hands, and feet.
 - Apply sunscreen 15 minutes before going out in the sun.
 - If you don't have much hair, apply sunscreen to the top of your head, or wear a hat.
 - Reapply at least every two hours, more often if you're sweating or jumping in and out of the water.
 - Apply sunscreen to children older than 6 months every time they go out.
- Give babies and children extra care in the sun. Ask a health care professional before applying sunscreen to children under 6 months old. (Many health care professionals do not recommend using sunscreen for infants under 6 months.) Keep infants out of the sun, preferably in the shade, and/or covered with a light cotton blanket. Be sure infants do not become overheated.
- Read more at: [FDA.gov | Sunscreen: How to Help Protect Your Skin from the Sun](https://www.fda.gov/drugs/understanding-over-counter-medicines/sunscreen-how-help-protect-your-skin-sun) (<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/understanding-over-counter-medicines/sunscreen-how-help-protect-your-skin-sun>)