



Monthly Health Watch



News with a Monthly Health Theme

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Health Tips For Those Final Summer Days

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Back-to-school catalogues may be arriving, but there is still plenty of summer left; still time for summer sports leagues and pool parties and playing at the beach; still time to get in trouble with sunburns, heat stroke and injuries. The following tips are good reminders to continue to be careful, especially when you are outdoors for longer periods of time, making the most out of these last weeks of summer.

1. Keep those sunglasses on. They're not just a fashion statement. Unprotected sun exposure can cause melanoma to occur in the eye as well as in the skin, and UV rays can cause cataracts later in life. Look for sunglasses that wrap around to shade your eyes from the sides as well as the front. Sunglasses also keep you from squinting, which can reduce your chances of getting a tension headache or migraine attack.

2. Avoid the midday sun. You may have a tan but you can still get burned. The sun's rays are at their highest intensity midday, so plan your outdoor activities early in the morning or in late in the day. Sunscreen can't do it alone. Do your part to practice safe sun exposure.

3. Watch the thermometer. Some days are just too hot, period! Especially in August. If temperatures are too high or if there is a high degree of humidity, you should reduce the length and intensity of your exercise routine.

4. Get wet. Swimming is an excellent exercise option. The water's buoyancy takes stress off your body and helps keep you cool.

5. Try cycling. Bike riding is recommended as a summer activity due to the breeze created as you roll by. Not up for the Tour de France? You can still don a yellow jersey and tour your neighborhood. By the way, that bright shirt has a purpose. It makes you easy to see. Headlights at night are important for the same reason. And please don't forget to wear your helmet.

6. Asthmatics, beware. People with asthma can be especially hard-hit in the summer heat. Watch for ozone alerts, and then slow down in the heat, use air conditioning, and avoid smoke, including smoke from a campfire.

7. Watch for ticks. Ticks can carry Lyme disease, which affects 20,000 people per year. Wear a hat and protective clothing in bushy or wooded areas and watch for rash, flu-like symptoms, and achy joints. If you are bitten, seek medical attention for early diagnosis and treatment.

8. Drink lots of fluids. It is easy to get dehydrated in hot climates, especially if you are not used to high temperatures. Always carry a water bottle and drink from it often. Then recycle the bottle!

Keep your pooch cool during the dog days of summer

It's not just people who have to take special precautions to beat the heat. Keep your furry friends safe with these [summer tips from the Humane Society of the United States](#).

Did you know ... ?

Aetna now works with Pets Best to offer pet insurance? Visit www.petsbest.com to find out more.

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Putting your best foot forward...

We know ... they're easy and comfortable. And they've come to symbolize summer. But did you know wearing flip-flops can be dangerous? Check out the "10 Essential Flip-Flop Tips" on the [American Podiatric Medical Association website](#).

Sizzle to Miami Kids' Summer by Sponsoring Sports Camp

More than 200 kids are honing their sports skills during the Summer Sports Camp at Miami's Shenandoah Park. Created in 1991 by the Kiwanis Club of Miami, the camp promotes health and fitness in kids through a sports and mentoring program for youth ages seven to 13. "This program is such an asset for kids from low-income families who otherwise would be sitting at home this summer," said Kiwanis president Ricardo Gonzalez.

"I couldn't sleep last night and there was nothing else I could watch on TV," said Roxana Rodriguez, a nine-year old who has participated in the camp for the last three years. "I was counting every minute until this morning," she recalled while greeting friends with infectious laughter.

Like Rodriguez, most of the kids are used to calling Shenandoah Park home for eight weeks of their year. Girls and boys attend the daily program and learn from trainers, referees and coaches -- the majority of whom volunteer their time and expertise to the cause. Many of them learned their skills while growing up in the camp themselves.

"When I first came, I was only seven, and I wouldn't be anywhere else today," affirms Allan Valenzuela, a 21-year-old who has spent his last eight summers as a volunteer, coach and counselor at the camp. Now a junior at Miami Dade College majoring in Education, Valenzuela's summer focus is to share what he learned earlier in life: the benefits of physical activity and socializing. "When I was a little kid, I was overweight and shy. Here I discovered my passion to serve others and to play baseball."

The free summer camp program teaches several sports such as baseball, swimming, tennis, football, basketball and soccer. "I've always played tennis, but my goal by the end of the camp is to learn football," said Darien Leon, 13, who has participated in the program for the last four years.

Rodriguez's favorite game is soccer because "it makes your legs stronger," the 4th grader explains as he uses his hands and legs to demonstrate the game's techniques. "It's like watching Argentina and Mexico (the professional teams). How do they guess where to go when the other team is always blocking you? It's a lot of strategy."

Besides sports, the long-day program includes field trips to local museums and zoos, a daily lunch and snacks. This year, the supplies and activities are partially funded by an Aetna Foundation grant of \$25,000. It's all part of Aetna's broader campaign to combat childhood obesity, and educate parents and kids about the joys and health benefits of being fit.

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