

June 2009

PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

Special points of interest:

- Insect repellent containing greater than 35% DEET provides no additional protection.
- Just a few sunburns can increase your risk of skin cancer.
- Keep your hot water heater at or below 120°F to prevent burns.

FIGHT THE BITE THIS SUMMER



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Boonville, MO—Warm summer evenings sitting around the barbeque grill or the neighborhood pool, walking through the woods or even mowing the yard, we’re all at risk of the dreaded mosquito. To protect yourself from mosquitoes and West Nile Virus, which is transmitted by mosquitoes, birds, various animals and humans, the Cooper County Public Health Center offers the following tips:

- Turn over or remove containers in your yard where rainwater collects, such as potted plant trays, buckets or toys
- Empty bird baths once a week
- Remove old tires from your yard
- Clean roof gutters and downspout screens
- Drill holes in the bottoms of recycling containers that are kept outdoors
- Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use
- Eliminate standing water on flat roofs, boats and tarps

PROTECT YOURSELF

- Wear long, loose and light-colored clothing
- Apply insect repellent to clothing and sparingly to exposed skin
- Use insect repellent products with no more than 20-30% DEET (N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) for adults and less than 10% for children (DEET in high concentrations [greater than 35%] provides no additional protection)
- Make sure all windows and doors have screens, and that all screens are in good repair

To combat the spread of disease, the health department monitors West Nile reported human cases and has free educational material available to the public.

For more information on Mosquitoes and/or West Nile virus, contact Kim Wiemholt RN at 660-882-2626.

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Take precautions to avoid sunburns—which can increase your risk of skin cancer.

“Unprotected skin can be damaged by the sun’s UV rays in as little as 15 minutes.”

Play it Safe in the Summer Sun

June 21st marks the official “first day of summer”, but many residents are already enjoying the warm weather and longer days. Summer is a great time to have fun outdoors, but the Cooper County Public Health Center reminds you to take precautions to avoid sunburns, which can increase your risk of skin cancer.

To help prevent skin cancer while still having fun outdoors, practice these simple tips:

- Seek shade under a tree, umbrella or pop-up tent, especially during midday hours (10 am–4 pm), when UV rays are strongest and do the most damage.
- Cover up with clothing to protect exposed skin. A long-sleeved shirt and long pants with a tight weave are best, but that’s not always practical. A t-shirt, long shorts or a beach cover-up are good choices, too—but it’s wise to double up on protection by applying sunscreen or staying in the shade when possible.
- Wear a hat with a wide brim to shade the face, head, ears and neck. Baseball caps are popular, but they don’t protect ears and neck. If you choose a cap, be sure to protect exposed areas with sunscreen.
- Grab sunglasses that wrap around and block as close to 100% of UVA and UVB rays as possible, as they can lead to cataracts later in life.
- Rub on sunscreen with sun protective factor (SPF) 15 or higher, and both UVA and UVB protection. For most effective protection, apply sunscreen generously 30 minutes before going outdoors. And, don’t forget to protect ears, noses, lips and the tops of feet which often go unprotected. Take sunscreen with you to reapply during the day, especially after swimming or exercising. This applies to “waterproof” and “water resistant” products as well. Remember, sunscreen reduces damage

from UV radiation, it doesn’t eliminate it.

UV rays reach you on cloudy and hazy days as well as bright and sunny days. UV rays will also reflect off any surface like water, cement, sand and even snow.

Turning pink? Unprotected skin can be damaged by the sun’s UV rays in as little as 15 minutes. Yet it can take up to 12 hours for skin to show the full effect of sun exposure. So, if skin looks “a little pink” today, it may be burned tomorrow morning. To prevent further burning, get out of the sun.

Tan? There’s no other way to say it—tanned skin is damaged skin. Any change in the color of your skin after time outside—whether sunburn or suntan—indicates damage from UV rays.

Cool and cloudy? You still need protection. UV rays, not the temperature, do the damage. Clouds do not block UV rays, they filter them—and sometimes only slightly.

Parents, keep in mind that just a few serious sunburns can increase your child’s risk of skin cancer later in life. Kids don’t have to be at the pool, beach, or on vacation to get too much sun. Their skin needs protections from the sun’s harmful UV rays whenever they’re outdoors. Help your children play it safe in the sun and protect your own skin as well. You’re an important role model.

The Cooper County Public Health Center wishes everyone a fun and happy summer. Remember to properly protect yourself and your family this summer. When outside, seek shade, cover up, wear a hat, use sunglasses and rub on the sunscreen!

For more information, contact Kim Wiemholt at 660-882-2626.

June is Home Safety Month

Unintentional injuries in the home result in nearly 21 million medical visits, on average, each year. In accordance with Home Safety Month, the Cooper County Public Health Center encourages residents to consider their home's danger areas and take some simple steps to minimize the risk of potential injuries, or even death:

Prevent Falls

- Use a ladder for climbing, not a stool or furniture
- If you have small children, use baby gates at the top and bottom of the stairs

Prevent Poisonings

- Keep all cleaners out of reach of children and in original containers. Do not mix them together.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors.

Prevent Fires and Burns

- Have working smoke alarms and hold fire drills
- Stay by the stove when cooking, especially when you are frying food.
- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn. Turn them off when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- If you smoke, smoke outside. Lock matches and lighters in a place where children can't reach them.
- Only light candles when an adult is in the room. Blow the candle out if you leave the room or go to sleep.

Prevent Choking and Suffocation

- Things that can fit through a toilet paper tube can cause a young child to choke. Keep coins, latex balloons and hard rounds foods, such as peanuts and hard candy out of reach.
- Clip the loops in window cords and place them up high where children can't get them.

Be Smart Around Water

- Stay within an arm's length of children in and around the water. This includes bathtubs, toilets, pools and spas— even buckets of water.
- Put a fence all the way around your pool or spa
- Keep your hot water at or below 120° F to prevent burns.

For more information please visit www.homesafetycouncil.org or contact Kim Wiemholt RN at 660-882-2626.



Keep all household cleaners and medications out of reach of children and in their original containers.

*“Things that can
fit through a toilet
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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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Steps to Food Safety—Sue's corner

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends the following basic food safety steps in preventing food borne illness:

- Clean—Wash hands and Surfaces often.
- Separate—Separate raw meat, poultry, and egg products from cooked foods to avoid cross-contamination.
- Cook—Raw meat, poultry, and egg products need to be cooked thoroughly. Use a food thermometer to ensure foods have reached a high enough temperature to kill

any harmful bacteria that may be present.

- Chill—Store leftovers within 2 hours of cooking.

Listeria is a bacteria that can grow at refrigerator temperatures. It causes listeriosis—an illness that can be particularly harmful to at-risk groups: pregnant women and their unborn babies, newborns, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems. The USDA recommends following these 3 simple steps to prevent listeriosis:

1. Keep the refrigerator at 40°F (4°C) or below. Listeria will

grow in the refrigerator, and it will grow faster at temperatures above 40°F.

2. Use ready-to-eat, refrigerated foods as soon as possible. The longer ready-to-eat refrigerated foods are stored, the more time listeria has to grow.
3. Clean the refrigerator regularly. Listeria can spread from one food to another through spills in the refrigerator. That's why keeping the refrigerator clean is also important!



Separate raw meats, poultry and egg products from cooked foods—to avoid cross-contamination.