



## Health Tips for Summer

### Be Good to Your Eyes

To protect your [vision](#) at work and at play, wear protective eyewear. When outdoors, wear [sunglasses](#) that block at least 99% of ultraviolet A and B rays. Sunglasses can help prevent [cataracts](#), as well as [wrinkles](#) around the [eyes](#).

### Sleep Well

Resist the urge to stay up later during long summer days. Instead pay attention to good [sleep](#) hygiene by keeping the same [bedtime](#) and wake-up schedule and not drinking alcohol within three hours of [bedtime](#).

1. **Stay cool and hydrated.** Drink water, at least two to four cups (16-32 ounces) upon rising, and similar amounts if you are going out for activities and exercise. Carry water with you in a hard plastic container (more stable polycarbonate rather than polyethylene that leaches plastic into the water). You may also use a traveling water filter. Check your local water stores or [www.realgoods.com](http://www.realgoods.com). Most people need two to three quarts of liquid per day, and more in hot weather or with sweating and exercise. Review Chapter 1 of *Staying Healthy with Nutrition* or Chapter 7 of *The Staying Healthy Shopper's Guide* for further information on Water.
2. While enjoying the sun and outdoors, **protect yourself from overexposure** to sunlight by wearing a hat and using natural sunscreens without excessive chemicals. Carry Aloe Vera gel for overexposure and have an aloe plant growing in your home for any kind of burn. The cooling and healing gel inside the leaves will soothe any sunburn. It works great.
3. **Keep up or begin an exercise program.** Aerobic activity is important for keeping the heart strong and healthy. If you only work out in a health club, take some time to do outdoor refreshing activities -- hiking, biking, swimming, or tennis. Reconnecting with these activities will help keep your body and mind aligned.
4. **Enjoy Nature's bounty** – fresh seasonal fruits and vegetables at their organic best. Consuming foods that are cooling and light -- fresh fruits, vegetable juices, raw vital salads, and lots of water -- will nourish your body for summertime activities. Include some protein with one or two meals. There are a number of light, nourishing proteins that don't require cooking. Most of these complement fruits and vegetables nicely-- nuts, seeds, sprouted beans, soy products, yogurt, kefir, and cottage cheese. Fish and poultry can also be eaten.
5. **Take some special summer time** with your family, kids, and friends who share the enjoyment of outdoors. Plan a fun trip if you're able and motivated for a day or longer -- hiking in the wild, camping, playing at the river, or a few days resting at the ocean. Rekindling our Earth connection has benefits that last beyond this season, continuing to enrich the whole of your life.

6. **Relax and breathe.** You've been working hard. This is the season to slow the pace a bit and absorb the light that stimulates your hormonal message center. Leave your cell phone at home or take a week off from TV. In many European countries, most of the population has a month off during the summer.
7. **Sun teas are wonderful.** Use flowers and leaves (or tea bags) in a clear half- or one-gallon glass jar filled with spring water. Hibiscus or red clover flowers, peppermint, chamomile, or lemon grass are all good choices, or use your local herbs and flowers that you learn are safe, flavorful, and even medicinal. Leave in the sun for two hours or up to a whole day. Moon teas can also be made to enhance your lunar, dreamy side by letting your herbs steep in the cooling, mystical moonlight. Add a little orange or lemon peel, or a sprig of rosemary and a few jasmine flowers.
8. **Nutritional supplements** can support you with a greater amount of physical energy, enhancing your summer activities. The B-complex vitamins are calming to the nervous system and helpful for cellular energy production, while vitamin C and the other antioxidants protect your body from stress, chemical pollutants, and the biochemical by-products of exercise. Helpful summer herbs are Siberian ginseng as an energy tonic and stress protector, dong quai is a tonic for women, hawthorn berry is good for the heart, and licorice root will help energy balance and digestion.
9. Use the summer months to **deepen the spiritual awakening** begun in the spring. Begin by checking your local bookstore or the web for ideas that interest you. Plan a vacation that incorporates these new interests and provides you time to read, relax, contemplate, and breathe.
10. Above all, give yourself the time to **truly experience Nature**. This can happen, even in a city park, if you relax and let in your surroundings. When traveling, take activities for the family and your first aid kit for bites, bee stings, and injuries. Check for ticks after your hikes. Watch for overexposure, take time in the shade, and drink your water.

## Summer Health Tips

### Extreme Heat Safety

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- Stay out of the direct sun. Seek shaded or air conditioned areas such as libraries or malls. [more](#)
- Whenever possible, schedule outdoor events (public gatherings, sporting events) early in the morning when it's cooler and the air quality is better.
- Drink plenty of fluids. (Avoid alcohol and caffeine.)
- Wear light-colored, light-weight clothing. Use hats with brims and sunscreen for more protection.
- The elderly, small children, and people with chronic health conditions are more vulnerable to the heat. Call and check on friends, family, and neighbors.
- Anyone showing signs of heat stroke (altered mental state, not sweating, nausea) should seek medical attention immediately.

### Summer Vacations

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- Planning a trip outside the United States? Certain shots may be [required or recommended](#). Travel clinics can get properly immunized. [more](#)

- Take steps to [stay healthy and safe](#) when you travel.

## Swim Safely

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Swimming is a great way to beat the summer heat and it is a fun way to get exercise. Whether you are swimming in your own backyard pool, in your family or neighbor's pool, or in a natural body of water, follow these tips to keep this popular summer pastime safe:

- Never swim alone! Even experienced or strong swimmers might need help.
- Do not leave young children or non-swimmers unattended.
- Encourage children and other non-swimmers to use life jackets or other approved flotation devices.
- Sign up for swimming lessons—you are never too old or too young to learn how to swim!
- Do not jump or dive into the shallow end of a pool.
- Keep away from pool drains, pipes, or other openings to avoid entrapments.
- Always keep a phone nearby.
- Learn CPR. It's a lifesaving skill, literally.
- Install a fence, with self-closing and self-latching gates, around backyard swimming pools. Check local ordinances or laws to make sure you are in compliance.
- Avoid drinking alcohol before or during swimming and while supervising children.

## Beach Safety

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- See the latest [beach closures and advisories](#).
- If you own a pet, remember to scoop the poop and dispose of it properly. Pet waste can pollute beaches and make people and animals sick. Follow local rules for pets at the beach, including rules for leashes [more](#)

## Sun Safety

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Protect yourself from exposure to the sun's rays and reduce your risk of sunburn, [skin cancer](#), and heat stress:

- Apply sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher and both UVA and UVB protection before you go outside, even on cloudy days.
- Reapply sunscreen after swimming or sweating or after staying outside for more than two hours.

- Wear clothing, sunglasses, and a hat with a wide brim to protect exposed skin.
- Seek shade, especially during midday hours.
- Drink plenty of fluids. [more](#)

## Food Safety

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- Eating out more this summer? View [food safety inspection reports](#) for your favorite restaurants.
- Foodborne illnesses increase in warmer weather. [Keep food safe](#) during cookouts and camping trips by handling, preparing, and cooking it properly.

## Rabies

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Prevent animal bites and [rabies](#) by avoiding contact with wild animals.

## Lyme Disease

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[Ticks](#) are most active in late June and early July. Prevent [Lyme Disease](#) and other tick-borne illnesses by avoiding ticks and tick bites.

## West Nile Virus

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Mosquitoes are most active in the summer months. Protect yourself against [West Nile Virus](#) and other mosquito-borne illnesses by using bug spray with DEET, avoiding mosquito breeding grounds, and taking other preventive measures. [more](#)

## More

### Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes are carriers (vectors) for many diseases, including [West Nile Virus \(WNV\)](#), [Eastern Equine Encephalitis \(EEE\)](#), and [Zika Virus](#). The species of mosquitoes that carry WNV and EEE are found in Rhode Island and bite until the first heavy frost (usually the end of October). The species of mosquitoes that carry Zika Virus are not known to be in Rhode Island any time of year. Everyone who participates in outdoor activities should take actions to protect themselves from mosquito bites.

### What You Should Do

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#### Protect yourself

- Put screens on windows and doors. Fix screens that have holes.

- At sunrise and sundown (when mosquitoes who carry WNV or EEE are most active), minimize outside activities. If you must be outside, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants and use bug spray. If you are traveling to a [Zika Virus area](#), the species of mosquitoes that carry Zika Virus are active throughout the day (dawn through dusk) and are most active at midday.
- Use bug spray with at least 20% DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide). Make sure that bug spray does not have more than 30% DEET. Do not use bug spray with DEET on infants. [more](#)
- Put mosquito netting over playpens and baby carriages.

### **Get rid of mosquito breeding grounds**

- Get rid of anything around your house and yard that collects water. One cup of water can produce thousands of mosquitoes!
- Clean your gutters so that they can drain properly.
- Remove any water from unused swimming pools, boats, or water features and cover them.
- Change the water in birdbaths at least two times a week.
- Help your neighbors, friends and family do the same things.

Despite constant warnings, barely one third of Americans use sunscreen regularly, according to a recent study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This is particularly dangerous, as [melanoma](#), the deadliest form of [skin cancer](#), is on the rise among white Americans, increasing from 8.7 cases per 100,000 people in 1975 to 27.6 per 100,000 in 2008, the National Cancer Institute reports. To protect yourself from the sun's harmful rays, use a [sunscreen](#) with an SPF of 30 or higher and broad spectrum protection to shield against both UVA and UVB rays of the sun.

One in six Americans are sickened and 128,000 are hospitalized each year due to [foodborne illnesses](#), according to the CDC. What's more, food poisoning peaks in the summer months when warmer temperatures provide a breeding ground for germs to flourish. Keep your family and guests safe by taking extra precautions like washing hands and prep surfaces immediately after they have touched raw meat or poultry, cleaning grill surfaces with a moist cloth before cooking, and discarding marinades and sauces that have come in contact with raw meats. Finally, use a food thermometer to ensure grilled meats have reached the proper internal temperature to kill harmful bacteria.

Lyme disease, the most common tick-borne infectious disease in the United States, can cause symptoms of fever, headaches, body aches, and fatigue. If left untreated, it can cause more severe health problems

and in some cases may even prove fatal. In 2013, state health departments reported 27,203 confirmed cases and 9,104 probable cases of [Lyme disease](#). The best way to protect yourself from ticks is to avoid wooded and bushy areas, walk in the center of trails, and wear protective clothing, such as boots, long pants and shirts, and socks in any areas ticks may be. Using an insect repellent with 20 to 30 percent DEET on exposed skin and clothing can also offer protection. Finally, removing clothes and showering immediately after coming indoors, followed by a full-body tick check, will help protect against Lyme disease.