

Health And Well Being

Guide To Warm Weather Comfort And Safety

(NAPSA)—Warm weather means not just an increase in outdoor activities but emergency room visits as well. By taking a few steps to prepare, you can protect yourself and your family for more fun in the sun.

Dr. Jamison Satterfield, a pediatrician for over 25 years, advises pulling together a bag to bring on your outings to help avoid unnecessary hospital visits. Essential items that should not be overlooked or underestimated include:

First Aid Kit: If left untreated, cuts and scrapes can get infected. Always keep on hand a topical sterilizer—tube of Neosporin—for a quick cleanup. Adhesive bandages, gauze, medical tape, alcohol wipes and an ice pack may also come in handy. Check your kit regularly to replace used items and remove expired products.

Sunblock: The rate of deadly melanoma skin cancer has almost tripled in the last 35 years despite all the warnings. Dr. Satterfield recommends broad-spectrum sunscreens with an SPF of 30 or higher. Water-resistant sunscreens can be less effective so it's best to avoid them unless you're going swimming. In addition, sunscreen containing insect repellent has its SPF cut by more than 30 percent. "When it comes to sunscreen, apply more and do it more often," added Dr. Satterfield. Sunscreen should be applied 30 minutes prior to sun exposure and reapplied generously every two hours.

Over time, sunscreens lose effectiveness, changing in color or texture. At the expiration date or yearly, sunscreen should be discarded. Also note, over-the-counter pain relief medications and antihistamines decrease the efficacy of sunscreen. So do some prescription drugs including antibiotics as well as many acne treatments containing benzoyl peroxide.



Protect your family from sunburn, bug bites and infection this summer.

Mosquito Repellent: Chances of contracting mosquito-borne illnesses are on the rise, especially for children and the elderly. A study by The New England Journal of Medicine found that bath oil, which some people use as a repellent, protects for less than 10 minutes. Other natural repellents such as eucalyptus oil, cactus juice, lemongrass oil, juniper, or even peppermint or vanilla, are no better.

While DEET certainly works, Dr. Satterfield does not recommend it for children under age 1. He does recommend Thermacell Mosquito Repellent products, including lanterns, handheld repellents and backyard torches, which are designed to create a 15x15-foot "bubble" of protection that biting pests cannot penetrate. These products use a repellent that mimics the natural insecticide found in chrysanthemums and are virtually odorless, flameless and portable.

Emergency Car Kit: Keep on hand hand-wipes or sanitizer, bottles of water, and hearty snacks that can take the heat, such as dried fruits, nuts and granola bars, for a quick, protein-rich snack. Other emergency items can include a couple of flares, flashlight, hats, umbrella and blanket. Dr. Satterfield said he also keeps a Thermacell repeller on hand for roadside use and picnics.

Jamison J. Satterfield, M.D., practices pediatric medicine in Charlotte, N.C., and has been included in the Charlotte magazine Top Doctor list for numerous years.