

# LET'S Talk

SUMMER 2006

HEALTHY BODIES • SOUND MINDS • A SAFE PLACE TO WORK

## Summer Is Fun — But Drink Up!

When planning activities outdoors this summer, make sure you drink plenty of water because it's very easy to get dehydrated. The human body is capable of storing only a limited amount of water, and through breathing, sweating and eliminating we lose fluids. Environmental conditions like humidity and heat trigger perspiration (to cool the body), which uses up even more fluids. Add to that any exercise, even walking, and you deplete still more fluids.

In hot or humid temperatures, you can lose from 2 to 3 quarts of water an hour. This is dangerous because when fluids in the body are depleted, you can become overheated. Lack of sufficient fluids strains the cardiovascular system, increases blood pressure, decreases performance and increases the likelihood of heat-related injury.

Unfortunately, feeling thirsty isn't a reliable indicator that it's time to drink. By the time you feel thirsty, you're probably already dehydrated.

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## Put the Brakes on Road Rage

IF YOU SPEND MUCH TIME IN YOUR CAR THIS SUMMER, you'll probably feel your temper slipping as other drivers steal your lane, blast their horns or flash their lights. You'll probably control your anger — but not everyone will. Every year, senseless traffic disputes end in death or serious injury for at least 1,500 men, women and children, according to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

There's more congestion, and there seems to be a growing impatience with people under a lot of stress, and people act it out in their cars.

Those who lose their tempers on the road are usually men, usually young and



usually insecure. Typically they have short fuses. Still, hundreds of average men and women have also snapped on the highways.

Even if you can control your stress on the road, you should realize that some drivers can't.

And if you become the target of another motorist? Drop back. The worst thing you can do is challenge them.

## Highway, Safe Way

To avoid danger on the road, the National Safety Council and the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety suggest you:

Know and avoid triggers that can set off aggressive drivers:

- Use your turn signals.
- Don't cut off drivers.
- Don't drive too slowly in the left lane.
- Don't tailgate.
- Avoid needless horn use.
- Don't blare your radio.
- Follow all rules of the road.

Watch for signs of an aggressive driver:

- Tailgating
- Flashing headlights
- Obscene gestures
- Deliberately obstructing other cars
- Verbal abuse

Don't get pulled into the "game" with aggressive drivers:

- Create space between your car and theirs.
- Avoid eye contact.
- Stay calm.

# Be Safe in the Sun

**IF YOU ENJOY BEING OUTDOORS IN THE SUMMER**, you're probably looking forward to the sunny days stretching ahead. But, don't let your guard down. Getting a sunburn can do more than spoil your fun — over time, too much sun can lead to skin cancer and other health problems.

Sun damage accumulates over the years. So, today's sunburn can mean tomorrow's skin cancer — the most common type of cancer in the United States.

## Protect Yourself From the Rays

The good news is that there's a lot you can do to prevent sunburn and skin cancer:

- **AVOID THE SUN WHEN UV RAYS ARE STRONGEST** — between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- **COVER UP.** Wear lightweight clothing and a broad-brimmed hat.
- **PROTECT YOUR EYES.** Wear sunglasses that block the most common UV rays — UVA and UVB.

In addition, use sunscreen that protects against UVA and UVB rays with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15.

Follow these tips:

- Apply sunscreen 20 minutes before being exposed to sunlight. Use it even on cloudy days.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours. Do this more often if you've been swimming or sweating.
- Don't put sunscreen on children ages 6 months and younger. Instead, keep them in the shade and dress them in protective clothing. Children older than 6 months need to wear sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or more.

## Self-Care Tips

There's no quick cure for sunburn, but there are some ways to help relieve the discomfort:

- **APPLY COLD COMPRESSES** for 15 minutes once an hour.
- **SOAK IN A COOL BATH.** Add a half-cup of cornstarch, oatmeal (in a nylon stocking to "dip" into the water) or baking soda.
- **TRY A PAIN RELIEVER.** Aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen or naproxen sodium can ease the pain of sunburn, if your doctor says it's OK. Don't give aspirin to anyone younger than age 19 years. It's linked to Reye's syndrome, a rare but sometimes fatal condition.

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# Safe Harbor: Floods and High Water

**MANY COMMUNITIES IN THE UNITED STATES** experience some kind of flooding from heavy rain, hurricanes or winter snow thaws.

No one can stop a flood. But if you're faced with one, you can take actions to protect your family and keep your property losses to a minimum.

## Before a Flood

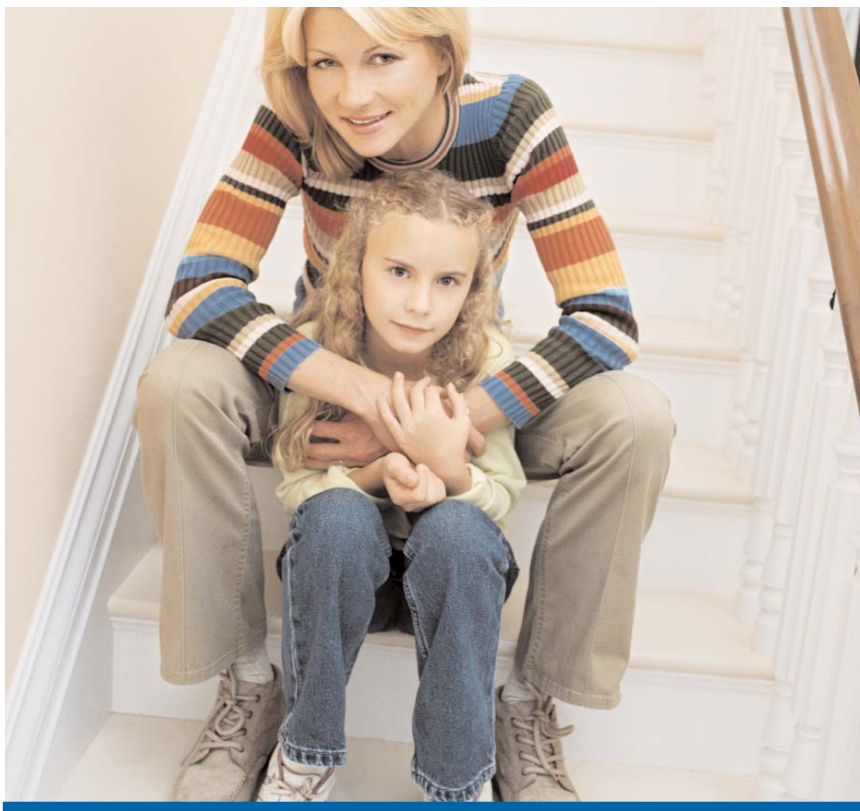
Floods or high water can be slow or fast rising. In either case, you should do the following:

- Develop an emergency communication plan in case family members are separated from one another during a flood; have a plan for getting back together.
- Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address and phone number of the contact person.
- Teach children how and when to call 911, the police and fire departments, and which radio station to tune to for emergency information.

## When It Arrives

If the water is rising, take these steps:

- Fill bathtubs, sinks and plastic soda bottles with clean water. Sanitize the sinks and tubs first by using bleach. Rinse, then fill with clean water.
- Turn off all utilities at the main power switch and close the main gas valve if evacuation appears necessary.
- Be prepared to evacuate. Take your pets and pet food with you.
- Don't drive through a flooded area. If you come upon a flooded road, turn around and go another way. More people drown in their cars than anywhere else.
- Abandon your car if it stalls and climb to higher ground. Many deaths



have resulted from attempts to move stalled vehicles.

- Don't walk through flooded areas. As little as 6 inches of moving water can knock you off your feet.
- Stay away from downed power lines and electrical wires. Electrocution is another major source of deaths in floods. Electric current passes easily through water.
- Retreat to the second floor, then the attic and, if necessary, the roof if the water starts to rise inside your house before you evacuate. Take a cell phone, dry clothing, a flashlight and a portable radio with you, then wait for help.
- Help your neighbors who may require special assistance — elderly people and people with disabilities.

## After the Flood

Flood dangers don't end when the water begins to recede.

Take these precautions:

- Keep power off until an electrician has inspected your system for safety.
- Boil water for drinking and food preparation for five minutes before using it until local authorities announce your water supply is safe.

Don't underestimate the damage and danger a flood can cause; keep your family safe.

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For More Information:  
Federal Emergency Management Agency,  
[www.fema.gov/hazards/floods](http://www.fema.gov/hazards/floods)



# Help Prevent Children's Health and Safety Risks

EACH YEAR, MORE THAN 14 MILLION CHILDREN in the United States ages 14 and younger suffer injuries that require medical attention. Yet, health experts estimate as many as 90 percent of these injuries can be prevented.

The following recommendations can help protect your children.

## Car Safety

The National Transportation Safety Board reports that highway deaths are the number one killer of children in the United States.

Depending on their weight and age, children should ride in one of the following:

- **INFANT SEATS** are designed for babies from birth to at least 20 pounds and one year old. They must ride rear-facing in the back seat.
- **CONVERTIBLE SAFETY SEATS** convert from rear-facing for infants to forward-facing for toddlers between 20 and 40 pounds and up to four years old.
- **BOOSTER SEATS** are for older kids who are not quite ready for a vehicle belt system.
- **SAFETY BELTS** can be used when children are old enough and large enough. The lap portion should fit snugly across the upper thighs, and the



shoulder strap should cross over the shoulder and across the chest.

## Bike Safety

Don't let children go biking without helmets. Head injuries from falls off bicycles are the leading cause of death in bicycle-related crashes, and more than 85 percent of head injuries can be prevented by wearing a helmet.

## Poison Prevention

To prevent poisoning:

- Never leave children alone with household products or medications.
- Call the Poison Control Center immediately at **800-222-1222** if you believe your child has swallowed a poisonous substance.

Being informed and vigilant are the best things you can do to keep your children safe and healthy.

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If you're planning some outdoor fun, here are some important tips to follow:

- According to the American College of Sports Medicine, you should drink about 16 ounces of water two hours before beginning strenuous activities.
- During your activity, drink approximately every 15 minutes to replace fluids lost through sweating.
- Always remember to drink before you become thirsty.
- Watch for symptoms of heat stress, which include nausea, headache, dizziness and a stoppage of perspiration. If at any time you think you are experiencing heat stress, stop your activity immediately and find a shady spot where you can rest. Then, drink enough water to lower your body temperature.



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