Celebrate Summer but Do It Safely: Summer Hazards and How to Avoid Them

What’s at Stake?

It’s summer! Time for the backyard barbecue, fireworks and fun in the sun. If you’re planning to host a day of summertime activities with family and friends, remember to work a little safety into the event, too.

What’s the Danger?

The risks associated with the traditional backyard barbecue and other summertime celebrations include E. coli, burns and heat illness.

How to Protect Yourself

Let’s look at some common hazards of summertime activities and how to address them.

Mind the Heat

If it does get hot, be prepared.

- Have extra sunscreen on hand to share with your guests.
- Have lots of water available to help prevent dehydration.
- Watch guests for signs of heat illness, including cramps, exhaustion, nausea, dizziness, pale and clammy skin, quick pulse and low blood pressure.

Mild cases of heat illness can be treated by moving the person to a cool area and supplying water to drink. However, heat stroke—when perspiration stops and the body temperature rises—is a life-threatening condition and requires immediate medical help.

Be Water Wise

Children, summer and water are a happy trio, but this trio can also be a deadly combination. If there's a body of water (swimming or wading pool, lake, ocean or river) nearby that children will be playing in, then you must:

- Establish and enforce water safety rules.
- Make sure a responsible adult is present when children are in or near the water.
- Have reaching and throwing water safety aids handy.
- Have a first aid kit handy.

Keep Foodborne Illnesses off The Menu

To prevent foodborne illness:

- Keep food, utensils and surfaces clean and protected from contact with disease-carrying insects, such as flies.
- Serve hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Keep meat hot on the barbecue until it's served, and cold items such as salads refrigerated. Use freezer packs to transport perishable foods in coolers.
- Use a food thermometer to ensure that meat is cooked thoroughly.
- Chicken must reach more than 165°F (74°C).
- Burgers and pork must be heated to at least 160°F (71°C).
- Steaks, roasts and chops should reach a minimum of 145°F (63°C).
- If you partially pre-cook meat in your microwave, barbecue it right away. Don't let it sit around.

Handle Fireworks Safely

Fireworks are safer than they used to be, but every year serious injuries do still occur. If fireworks are part of your celebration plans, follow these guidelines:

- Read and follow directions carefully.
- Only ignite fireworks outdoors in a well-cleared area.
- Have a responsible adult supervising all fireworks activity.

- Light fireworks one item at a time.
- Have a bucket of water available to douse used fireworks.

Designate Safe Drivers

Here are some ideas to help everyone get home safely:

- Arrange designated drivers before the party starts.
- Serve other beverages besides alcohol.
- Serve high protein food such as cheese snacks.
- Plan party activities that do not revolve around drinking.
- Close the bar an hour before the party ends and serve non-alcoholic beverages and snacks.
- Prevent intoxicated guests from driving.

Final Word

Enjoy summer safely by creating a fun and safe environment for family and friends to celebrate in.0