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Health and Safety Alert

Summer Safety



The purpose of this alert is to heighten awareness among caregivers and family members about some of the precautions they should take for themselves and individuals in their care during the summer months. The following simple suggestions will help insure that outdoor activities are safe and can be enjoyed to their fullest by everyone.



Food Poisoning

Picnics in the sun can be fun, but they also can lead to a trip to the hospital if the food is allowed to spoil or become contaminated in some way. Be sure to refrigerate all food; don't let any of it sit in the sun for any length of time. **Remember the two-hour rule – Discard food that has been left out of a refrigerator or well-chilled ice chest longer than two hours.** But also use common sense. Two hours may be too long on a very hot day, especially for dairy products. Make sure to wash your hands prior to handling food. Be sure to serve food on clean plates and use clean utensils. Cover your food; insects can spread dirt and germs. **Remember: “When in doubt, throw it out!”**



Creepy Crawlers & Flying Critters

Bees, wasps and hornets may cause medical emergencies when they sting. **Know whether anyone you are with is allergic to insect venom and, if so, be prepared by learning or reviewing the protocol that must be followed if that individual is stung!** For individuals without a specific protocol, the stinger should be removed promptly. Use a flat edge, such as a credit card, to scrape it from the place it is imbedded. Once the stinger is removed, wash the affected area and apply ice. Other insects also can cause problems, so it is important to use insect repellent when out and about. One insect of special concern in New Jersey is the deer tick, Deer ticks are tiny insects that live in low brush and can spread Lyme disease. If a tick becomes attached to the skin, get medical help as soon as possible.



West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus was first diagnosed in 1999 in New York City and has since spread across the country. West Nile Virus, a disease that initially affects birds, is spread from an infected bird to other birds, animals, and people through mosquito bites. To protect yourself, be sure to use approved insect repellent when outdoors. Apply it not only to exposed areas but also to clothing. You can gain added protection by wearing long sleeved shirts and long pants. Light colored clothing also offers some protection, since mosquitoes are drawn to dark colors.



Water safety Rules

- Make sure that the individual in your care has been medically cleared to participate in water activities.
- Make sure you understand each individual's abilities, skill level and familiarity with the type of place where the activity will occur, whether it is a pool, a river, the ocean, or on a boat.
- Water activities should only be permitted when a certified life guard is present.
- Do not chew gum or eat while in the water because it could cause choking.
- When boating, make sure that the individual in your care uses a Coast Guard approved life jacket.
- **Watch out for the "Dangerous TOO's"** ~ TOO tired, TOO cold, TOO far from safety, TOO much sun, TOO much strenuous activity.



Summer Camps

It is important to plan properly for a camping experience. You should:

- Be familiar with the camp's physical layout and any dangers it might pose for the individual(s) attending.
- Know who will be supervising the individual .Be sure you are comfortable with the activities and interaction with staff that will be taking place each day.
- Communicate face-to-face with the camp director about any dietary requirements, supervisory requirements, medical needs including medications, or behavioral issues. Provide the director with a written copy of any relevant information (e.g. ISP, Behavioral Plan, etc.).
- Make sure the individual will have access to any prescribed lotion for sunburn or bug bites. Be aware of any medications the individual is taking that could increase his or her sensitivity to the sun. Communicate this information to the camp staff in writing.
- If there will be water activities, discuss the individual's abilities, experience and needs with the camp director. Provide a written copy of those needs.



Barefoot/Sandals

Be mindful of potential injuries when going barefoot or wearing sandals. Wear shoes that cover the entire foot when participating in outdoor sports such as bicycling or running.



Outdoor Grills

Serious burns can result when an outdoor grill is in use. Be sure to:

- Check grills in advance to make sure they are in proper working order.
- Be sure the grill lid is open before lighting a gas grill.
- Don't squeeze additional fire starter on coals when they are already burning.
- Supervise individuals in the area closely when grilling.

Disclaimer

This alert is intended to provide DDD staff and providers, families and individuals with information about some ways they can stay safe in the summer. This alert is not intended to be, nor should it suffice as, a substitute for training. Staff who have been trained in summer safety protocols are still required to execute their training.