

VitaMin

Vital health information in a minute!

Summer Safety, Summer Fun

You can have both!

Summer's here, and whether you spend your time vacationing at the beach, visiting the local pool or relaxing at home, it's important to remember the steps you should take to help you and your family have a healthy, safe summer.

Protect your skin

- Use a sunscreen that's rated SPF 30 or higher and re-apply every two hours or more often if you've been swimming or sweating excessively.
- Avoid unnecessary sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays – the rays that are the primary cause of skin cancer – are most intense.
- Wear protective clothing, such as long pants, long-sleeve shirts, UV-protective sunglasses and broad-brimmed hats.
- Avoid tanning and UV-tanning booths.

Take the plunge

- Never swim alone.
- Never try to keep up with someone who is a stronger or more skilled swimmer.
- Don't drink alcohol when swimming.
- Make sure you are not too cold, too tired or too far from safety.
- Wear a life vest if you are boating or swimming in a lake or river.



Enjoy the outdoors

- Wear a helmet when in-line skating or biking.
- Avoid poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac. If you touch these plants, wash the affected area with soap and water to help minimize any allergic reaction.
- Drink plenty of fluids and take frequent breaks in cool places to avoid overheating.
- Keep your home playground safe by using at least nine inches of wood chips or mulch for the surface.
- Use softer-than-standard baseballs, safety-release bases and batting helmets with face guards to reduce baseball-related injuries to children.
- Prevent serious trampoline injuries by using safety nets and allowing only one person on at a time. ■

Don't let injuries ruin your summer fun

Your daughter sprains her ankle. Your husband wakes up with a case of poison ivy. The last thing you want to do is spend a sunny day in the Emergency Room (ER) – and for these health issues, you do not have to. ERs provide immediate specialized care to people with serious, often life-threatening issues. Treatment for non-emergency conditions in an ER costs hundreds of dollars more than treatment at an urgent care center or your doctor's office. If you need care and you're not sure if you should go to the ER, call your doctor's office or just call the toll-free number listed on your ID card and speak to specially trained nurses who can help you with your health care questions.

