



For Immediate Release

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Health District Issues Summer Health Tips

Galveston County and Cities – With summer fun having arrived, the Galveston County Health District (GCHD) is reminding all residents to take health and safety precautions during the summer months to stay healthy.

“Summer is a great time in Galveston County with many enjoyable activities,” says Kurt Koopmann, GCHD’s Public Information Officer. “While having fun, remember it is important to protect yourself during the hot and humid summer months. When participating in outdoor activities, take simple safety measures – such as staying hydrated, exercising water safety, and preparing food correctly – to ensure that summer is both fun and safe.”

Following is a list of things that can be done to remain safe and healthy.

Protect yourself against West Nile virus.

- If outside during the hours between dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active, wear protective clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks.
- Consider the use of an insect repellent containing DEET, Use DEET according to manufacturer’s directions. According to the Centers for Disease Control other effective repellent products include Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus and IR3535.
- Make sure that doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.
- Eliminate standing water around your home where mosquitoes can breed.

Beat the heat and humidity.

- Drink lots of fluids to avoid dehydration. Water and diluted juices are best. Avoid alcohol, because it can lessen the body’s ability to cool.
- If possible, stay in air-conditioned areas. This is particularly important during peak sun hours.

- Wear lightweight, light colored, loose fitting clothing.
- Do not leave children or pets in an enclosed automobile.
- Check on neighbors and relatives, especially the elderly, who are at a high risk for heat-related conditions.
- Always use a sunscreen to protect against the sun's damaging rays, which can lead to sunburn, sun poisoning, and increase the risk of skin cancer. Use sunscreen with at least a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 15, the most effective products say "broad spectrum" or UVA/UVB protection on their labels. Apply the sunscreen 30 minutes before going into the sun to avoid it washing or sweating off quickly. When putting on the sunscreen, apply liberally and reapply frequently, especially after swimming or rigorous activity that causes you to sweat.

Prepare your food safely.

- Grill and cook chopped meat until well done. Use a meat thermometer to be sure your grilled meats are "done." Ground beef, for example, should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Keep raw meat, as well as their drippings, from touching other foods. Do not put meat you have already cooked back on a plate with raw meat.
- Wash your hands, utensils and cutting boards after they have been in contact with raw meat or poultry and before they touch another food.
- Bacteria can grow quickly at room temperature, so refrigerate leftover foods promptly.
- Wash produce thoroughly to remove visible dirt, and discard the outermost leaves of a head of lettuce or cabbage.

Practice water safety.

- Swim only in the presence of a lifeguard, or, for children, a parent or guardian.
- Be aware of signs posted at Galveston County beaches that are regularly tested for possible elevated levels of bacteria as part of the Texas Beach Watch Program. This is especially important after significant and/or heavy rainfall. Beach Water advisories can be found on the GCHD web site at www.gchd.org/pollution/BeachAdvisory.htm.

Following these tips everyone should enjoy a fun filled summer.

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(News Media: For more information contact Kurt Koopmann, GCHD Public Information Officer, 409-938-2211 or kkoopman@gchd.org)