



State of Illinois  
Illinois Department of Public Health

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# SUMMER?

*No Sweat.*



*A Summer Survival Guide*

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**Illinois Department of Public Health**



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# *Introduction*

Summertime's warm weather prompts most people to get outside and enjoy more outdoor activities. Regardless of which activity you choose — swimming, boating, bicycling, gardening — it is important to avoid health and safety hazards. The tips in this booklet will help you avoid some of the more common hazards associated with the summer season, so you can have fun in the sun!

*Summer? No Sweat* was compiled by the Illinois Department of Public Health with the assistance of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, the Illinois Secretary of State's Office, the University of Illinois Extension, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

# Summer Fun

## SWIMMING

### *Time at the Beach*

You will have more fun at the beach if you know how to avoid potential health hazards.



- All bathing beaches must display a current license issued by the Illinois Department of Public Health. Be sure one is posted.
- Avoid any beach littered with trash or other debris. Garbage attracts bugs and can wash into the water. Look for water that is reasonably clear and free of floating materials and odors. Avoid swimming at beaches where there are large populations of ducks or geese. The waste produced by these birds causes high bacteria levels in the water.
- Look for movement in the water; it helps keep the water clean. Do not swim in stagnant or still water.
- Look for a sandy — not muddy — beach that has a grassy or wooded area around it. Such areas reduce surface runoff into the swimming water.
- Do not swim at any beach right after a heavy rain. Runoff following a heavy rain may result in a high bacteria count.
- When diving at a beach, exercise extreme caution. Beach water is not as clear as water in a pool, so underwater obstructions may not be visible. If there is any doubt, do not dive.

Sunbathing is not as popular as it once was because of the growing awareness that spending too much time in the sun may increase the risk of skin cancer. If you do sunbathe — at a beach, in the backyard or at a swimming pool — take precautions to protect yourself from over-exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays.

- Limit the time you spend in the sun.
- Do not overdo it when the weather starts to turn warm. Begin with 15 minutes a day; then slowly increase the time you spend in the sun.

- Use liberal amounts of suntan lotion with a high sun-protection factor (SPF), even on cloudy days.
- Wear dark glasses to protect your eyes.

Whether swimming at a beach or at a pool, do not enter the water alone unless a lifeguard is on duty. Sadly, most deaths from drowning occur within a few feet of safety. A drowning victim trying to breathe usually cannot call for help.

If you see someone in trouble, try to reach the person with something he or she can hold on to, such as a shepherd's crook, jacket, belt, stick, rope, water ski, oar or fishing pole. A life preserver ring with a line attached enables you to pull the person to safety. If a life ring or a life jacket is not available, throw objects that float, such as a plastic bottle, spare tire, ball, picnic cooler or piece of wood. Be sure to throw the object within the drowning victim's reach.

If the victim is too far away to assist from shore, use a log, air mattress, surfboard, small boat, raft or anything else you can row or paddle with your hands. Help the person climb onto the float or have him hold on while you paddle back to shore. Approach a person who is in trouble in the water very cautiously. Do not let the victim pull you under.

A last option is to swim out and tow the victim back to shore, but try this only if you are a good swimmer and trained in lifesaving techniques. When swimming toward a victim, approach the person from behind. Even strong swimmers can drown trying to help others in the water.

To learn more about lifesaving procedures, contact your local American Red Cross chapter.

## *Swimming Pool Safety*

If you swim in any of Illinois' 3,500 public swimming pools, follow these health and safety tips.

- Check for a current operating license from the Illinois Department of Public Health; this license must be displayed.
- Determine if a lifeguard is present, especially if children are with you. If no lifeguard is on duty, do not let children swim unless they are accompanied by a responsible adult who



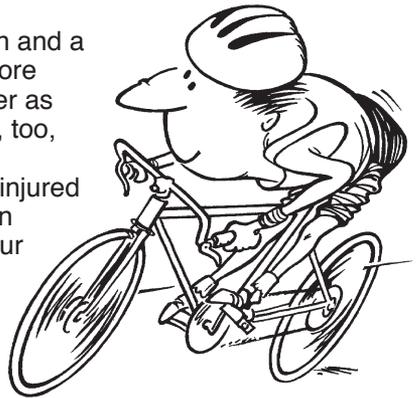
knows lifesaving techniques and first aid. No one should swim alone, no matter how experienced a swimmer that person may be.

- Look around the pool area to be certain lifesaving devices, such as a floating ring buoy and shepherd's crook, are readily available for emergency use.
- Be sure a grate covers the drain at the deep end of a swimming pool or in a wading pool. The suction created by the pool's circulating pumps can be very dangerous unless it is reduced by grates.
- To reduce the risk of eye, ear, nose or throat infection from contaminated water, swim only in pools in which water quality is properly maintained. Although it is impossible to tell if water is free of bacteria, the water should appear crystal clear, be continuously circulated and be maintained at a level that allows free overflow into the gutter or skimmer. There should not be a strong odor of ammonia or chlorine.

## **BICYCLING**

### *Bicycle Safety*

Bicycling is a popular form of recreation and a practical means of transportation for more than 4 million people in Illinois. However as bicycling's popularity has increased so, too, has the number of bicycle injuries and deaths. More than 4,000 bicyclists are injured each year in Illinois. The best protection against injury is to know how to ride your bicycle safely. When riding on a street or road, follow all traffic safety laws and rules that apply to people driving vehicles. The following rules are particularly important for bicyclists:



- Because they reduce the chances of a serious head injury in case of a crash, bicycle helmets are essential. Always strap on an approved safety helmet before you ride.
- Wear bright-colored clothing during the day and white or reflective clothing at night to increase your visibility to drivers.
- Bicycling after dark is very hazardous. Avoid riding at night if possible but, if you do ride in the dark, the law says your bike must be equipped with a front light that is visible for at least 500 feet and a rear red reflector that can be seen for up to 600 feet.

- Always ride with the traffic flow, as close to the right edge of the road as possible.
- Obey all traffic signals, pavement markings and directions given by police officers.
- Use hand signals to let drivers know your intentions.
- Learn to look over your shoulder without losing your balance or swerving to the left.
- Do not pass on the right. Motorists often will not look in that direction for passing cyclists.
- When moving the same speed as traffic, ride in the middle of the lane, especially at busy intersections.
- Keep both hands on the brakes. Allow extra stopping time in the rain.
- Be alert for cars pulling out and make eye contact with the drivers to ensure you have been seen.
- Do not weave between parked cars.
- Always ride one to a bike. Your bike is harder to balance with another person on it and a passenger may block your view of what is in front or back of you.

In addition to state laws, many municipalities have ordinances restricting bicycles in certain areas. Contact local law enforcement agencies in the areas where you plan to ride. For more information on bicycle safety, write or call —

**Illinois Department of Public Health**  
 Division of Injury and Violence Prevention  
 535 W. Jefferson St.  
 Springfield, IL 62761  
 217-785-2060  
 217-782-1235 (fax)  
 TTY (hearing impaired use only) 800-547-0466

### *Bicycle Maintenance*

Inspect your bicycle regularly to be sure it is safe to ride.

- Wheels should be securely attached, properly adjusted and spin freely with all spokes in place.
- All reflectors should be clean and intact.

- Adjust the seat and handlebars to a comfortable position and be sure all nuts and bolts are tightened.
- Make sure hand grips are secure.
- Tires should not have cracks on the sidewalls, cuts in the tread or excessive wear. To prevent excessive wear, use the proper tire pressure (printed on the sidewall of the tire).
- Check caliper brake pads for wear and proper adjustment.
- Make sure gear and brake cables move freely. Replace rusted or frayed cables.
- The chain should be free of rust. Do not put too much oil on the chain, however, since it will attract dust and dirt and shorten the life of the chain.
- Pedals should be securely fastened and pedal reflectors clean and visible.

Checking your bicycle takes only a few minutes and may prevent an accident or mechanical breakdown. If you are uncertain about the condition of your bicycle, visit a local bike shop. Most shops offer free safety inspections and books on do-it-yourself maintenance.

Always lock your bicycle when it is parked. Register your bicycle with your local police department, if possible, and be sure to keep your bike's serial number in a safe place.

## *Touring*

Bicycling long distances can be a healthy and adventuresome pastime. Many highways are not safe for bicyclists, so begin by selecting a route with a good road surface and an adequate shoulder. When choosing a route, avoid hills and look for places to eat and stay at night.

Equipment you will need includes a helmet, appropriate clothing for the weather, food, repair tools, spare parts, camping gear and other items for comfort and safety. Panniers — bags that attach to your bicycle — can be used to carry some of these items.

When bicycling with others, ride single file in groups of four to six. Groups should ride from 1/4 to 1/2 mile apart. Always ride at least two bicycle lengths from other vehicles. The distance between bicycles and vehicles should be increased to 10 bicycle lengths when going downhill.

## *Commuting*

Commuting to work by bicycle is convenient for many people but, since it is usually done during peak traffic hours, bicycle commuters need to keep some important safety considerations in mind.

- When selecting a route, consider traffic conditions, ease of the route and whether bike paths are available. Riding the same route every day will allow you to adjust to traffic conditions and will help motorists adjust to seeing you at about the same place every day.
- Be sure to have the appropriate equipment, including a helmet, bright clothing, rain gear, spare parts and tools.

## **BOATING SAFETY**

### *Trailer A Boat*

Before leaving home, be sure your boat is properly secured on the trailer. Inspect all the lines and tie-downs, as well as the winch. Tighten these as necessary and replace any that show signs of fraying or strand separation.

Make sure the trailer lights work, and test the braking system. Inspect the hitch and safety chain. Check the tire pressure and lug bolts. Tilt and secure the boat's motor to increase its clearance to the road.

Drive carefully, allowing for the extra length of the car and trailer when negotiating turns and passing other vehicles. Allow more time to stop, and pay special attention to speed limits.

Pull off the road periodically and walk completely around the trailer. Examine the tires and wheel bearings for overheating, test the tie-downs and check any equipment carried in the boat.

### *Operating A Boat Safely*

Check the following before putting your boat in the water:

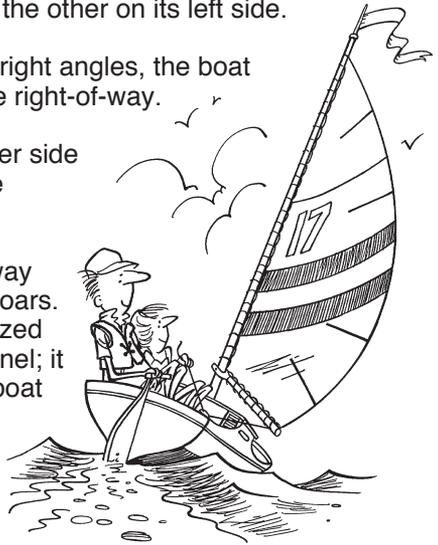
- Life jackets
- Fire extinguisher
- Backfire flame arrester
- Adequate ventilation
- Sound-producing device
- Navigation lights
- Visual distress signals
- Fuel level
- Anchor with line
- Paddle or oar
- Manual pump or bailer
- Vessel numbering

Be sure to check weather and water forecasts. And make sure you have sufficient fuel. (The "one-third rule" of fuel management is a good one to

follow: one-third of the fuel to go out, one-third to get back and one-third for reserve.) Check your boat's capacity plate and do not take more passengers than it recommends. Finally, be sure to tell someone where you are going and when you will return.

Once you have your boat in the water, follow these safety rules:

- Do not operate your boat carelessly or recklessly. This means operating your boat at a speed and in such manner that you do not endanger the life, safety or property of those in other watercraft.
- Do not allow anyone to ride or sit on the gunwales, tops of seat backs or on the decking over the bow or stern of the motorboat while it is underway, unless the person is inboard of guards or rails. A person is not prohibited from being on the decking over the bow or stern if they are there for the purpose of anchoring, mooring, casting off or some other necessary purpose.
- If you are approaching another boat "head on" (or nearly so), each boat must bear to the right and pass the other on its left side.
- When boats approach each other at right angles, the boat approaching on the right side has the right-of-way.
- A boat may overtake another on either side but must grant the right-of-way to the overtaken boat.
- A motorboat must yield the right-of-way to a boat propelled solely by sails or oars. (An exception is when a large motorized craft is navigating in a confined channel; it then has the right-of-way over a sailboat or rowboat.)
- Do not operate a motorboat in any area marked by signs or buoys as a restricted area.
- Do not exceed 5 miles per hour in designated "No Wake" areas. Do not exceed this speed when within 150 feet of a public launching ramp, even if the area is not posted.
- When towing a person on water skis, aquaplane or similar device, at least two competent persons must be in the boat. (It is unlawful to water ski from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour prior to sunrise.)



- Do not operate any watercraft within 150 feet of a diving flag unless directly associated with the diving activity.
- No one may operate a motorboat or personal watercraft equipped with a lanyard type engine cut-off switch unless the lanyard is properly attached to his or her person, clothing or life jacket as appropriate for the vessel.
- Personal watercraft and specialty prop craft cannot be operated between sunset and sunrise.

Approximately half of all boating accidents involve alcohol. Do not operate a watercraft while under the influence of alcohol or any other drug that impairs your ability to safely operate the craft.

Alcohol impairs a person's ability to operate a boat. And the boat's motion can actually increase alcohol's effects on the following:

- *Judgment* — Alcohol tends to make people think they perform better. However, the ability to make decisions quickly, particularly in high-risk situations, is one of the first skills impaired. And for decisions such as avoiding swimmers or objects in the water, **the wrong choice can be fatal.**
- *Vision* — Eyes transmit visual images of surroundings to the brain. Alcohol causes tunnel vision, blurs sight and increases eye fixations, causing incorrect information to be sent to the brain. This can cause boating accidents.
- *Balance* — An attack of dizziness or a misstep can lead to disaster. Most boating accidents occur when someone falls out of a boat or a boat capsizes.
- *Body Temperature* — Alcohol gives a false sense of warmth. In reality, it causes the body to lose heat.

## *Life Jackets*

What safety belts are to motor vehicles, personal flotation devices (PFDs), or life jackets, are to boats — simple devices that prevent serious injury or death. In Illinois, state law prohibits a person from operating a watercraft unless a life jacket approved by the U.S. Coast Guard is on board for each person.

In more than 80 percent of the approximately 700 boating deaths that occur in the United States each year, there are insufficient or inaccessible life jackets on board. Falling overboard is a frightening

experience that causes many people to panic — some to the point of drowning. Wearing a life jacket can save your life.

Most new U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets are lightweight and comfortable. There are five basic types:

- Type I and II PFDs will turn an unconscious person in the water from a face downward position to a vertical or slightly backward position.
- Type III PFDs will keep a conscious person in a vertical or slightly backward position. While a Type III PFD will not turn an unconscious person to a face-up position, it will maintain a person in this position once the person assumes the position.
- Type IV PFDs are not designed to be worn but to be thrown to a person in the water.
- Type V PFDs are approved for restricted use.

Illinois law states that no one may operate a watercraft under 26 feet in length unless a Type I, Type II, Type III or Type V personal flotation device is being properly worn at all times by each person under the age of 13 on board an operating watercraft. This requirement does not apply to persons who are below deck in totally enclosed cabin spaces or to persons operating a watercraft on private property.

### *Weather For Boaters*

High winds, rough water and thunderstorms can quickly turn a pleasant day of boating into a struggle to stay afloat. The best course is to simply avoid boating in adverse weather. So, before going out, check the weather forecast. The National Weather Service issues marine forecasts, including weather, winds, seas and visibility, every six hours.

When weather warnings are in effect, determine whether you can navigate your boat safely. Have the proper equipment aboard to avoid becoming stranded — a sturdy anchor and appropriate length of line, paddle or oars in case of engine failure or torn sails, and visual distress signals.

Weather prediction is not an exact science. It is important to regularly check the horizon for changes in wind, waves, water and sky. Dark threatening clouds or any steady increase in wind or waves indicate the possibility of a thunderstorm.

You can determine how far away (in miles) an approaching thunderstorm is by counting the seconds between the lightning flash and the thunder

and dividing by five. For example, if it takes 10 seconds to hear the thunder, the storm is about 2 miles away.

More information about boating may be obtained from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Questions about boating regulations or boating safety should be addressed to DNR's law enforcement division, 217-782-6431.

## **WATER SPORTS**

### *Water Skiing*

Water skiing is one of America's favorite water sports. To be safe, remember these simple rules:

- Always wear a life jacket.
- Someone other than the driver should act as a spotter. The driver should watch the waterway, not the skier.
- Always check the tow line before each person skis.
- Maintain a reasonable, safe speed at all times and be alert for other boats and watercraft.



### *Personal Watercraft (Jet Skis)*

The increasing popularity of personal watercraft — jet skis, water scooters, wet cycles, etc. — has resulted in a higher number of waterway accidents. These watercraft are not more dangerous than other types of

watercraft, but careless operation and lack of common courtesy can cause many problems.

Under the law, a personal watercraft is considered a motorboat. That means it must be registered, and the operator must abide by all the “rules of the water” that fishing boats, ski boats, cruisers and other boats must follow. This includes carrying the same safety equipment (a fire extinguisher, for example). Illinois law requires that each person aboard a personal watercraft or specialty pro-craft wear an approved life jacket. Although simple to operate, personal watercraft are not toys. If you are not old enough to drive a car, you should not operate a personal watercraft.

Keep the following safety tips in mind when operating personal watercraft:

- Take a boating safety course. Many dealers who sell personal watercraft participate in education programs. If your dealer does not, check with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources at 1-800-832-2599.
- Read the owner's manual carefully so you understand the controls and features.
- Wear proper safety equipment. Besides a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket, wear eye protection to keep water spray from obscuring your vision. Tennis or deck shoes offer the best control on your machine, and gloves and a wet suit offer protection from the elements. Attach a whistle to the zipper of your life jacket in case you need to summon help.
- Never operate personal watercraft without the safety cord attached to you. The cord will automatically shut off the engine in the event you fall from the watercraft.
- Look out for boats and, especially, other personal watercraft. Collisions are the most common type of personal watercraft accident.
- Respect the rights of others. That includes not following other boats too closely or jumping another boat's wake, a dangerous practice. Stay away from anglers and canoeists.
- Know the water in which you are operating so you can avoid weeds, rocks and sandbars.
- Stay out of swimming areas and away from wildlife.
- Never operate a personal watercraft at night.
- Do not operate a personal watercraft after consuming alcohol or other drugs.

# Summer Health Hazards

## **BEE, WASP AND HORNET STINGS**

For most people, a sting from a member of the Hymenoptera order (for example, bees, wasps, hornets, ants, etc.) usually results in nothing more than a painful swelling that disappears in a matter of hours. However, some people suffer allergic reactions to these kinds of stings. Symptoms of allergic reactions include dizziness, headaches, abdominal cramps or extreme nausea.

Other warning signs of an allergic reaction include breathing difficulties and hives or swelling in an area of the body other than where the sting occurred. The first allergic reaction is usually not severe, but should serve as a warning. The first sting sensitizes the victim, and additional stings result in increasingly severe reactions. Consult a physician the first time an allergic reaction occurs. If you are seriously allergic, your doctor may advise desensitization or that you carry a special kit containing emergency medicines to combat the allergic reaction.



If the stinger remains in the skin, remove it by gently scraping away or by gently teasing it out with a clean pointed instrument. Do not squeeze; this may inject more venom into the skin. Thoroughly wash Hymenoptera stings, and all insect bites, with soap and water. Apply an antiseptic anti-inflammatory ointment or cream, or a paste made of baking soda and water, to relieve itching and to prevent infection. If more serious symptoms occur, especially those indicating an allergic reaction, seek medical attention promptly.

Whether or not you are allergic to Hymenoptera stings, they are unpleasant and an experience to avoid. Follow these tips to discourage the attention of bees, wasps and hornets:

- Avoid scented products such as perfume, hair spray, suntan lotion, cosmetics, deodorant, shaving lotion, etc.
- Do not wear brightly colored and patterned clothes.
- Do not go barefoot, especially through vegetation.

- Do not swat at bees and yellow jackets with bare hands. Move slowly and steadily, and gently brush the insects off.
- Do not sit on or handle wet towels, washcloths, etc., without first making sure no insect is drinking the moisture.
- When a bee or a wasp gets into a moving car, remain calm; safely pull the car off the road, open the window and allow it to escape.
- Keep garbage in tightly sealed containers.
- Hypersensitive persons should wear a bracelet or necklace or carry a medical alert card indicating they are susceptible to shock-like symptoms or unconsciousness after a bee sting.
- Insect repellants used to repel mosquitoes and other biting flies will not repel wasps and bees.

Finally, be watchful when cooking, eating and drinking outdoors, especially during yellow jacket season, which heightens in late summer. Check for insects on food and in open drink containers before eating and drinking. Keep food covered.

## **TICKS**

The bite of a tick is seldom serious, unless the tick is infected with Rocky Mountain spotted fever, ehrlichiosis, Lyme disease or tularemia.

**Rocky Mountain spotted fever (RMSF)** is a serious disease transmitted by ticks. Cases of RMSF occur each year in Illinois. The most common carrier is the American dog tick (wood tick). The adult tick is dark brown or black, with white markings behind the “head” (mouth parts). The lone star tick is involved less frequently.

Symptoms of Rocky Mountain spotted fever generally develop within three to 14 days of the bite of an infected tick. The first symptoms are —

- Sudden onset of fever
- Deep muscle aches
- Severe headache
- Eye irritation

About three days after these symptoms appear, a red, spotty rash may develop, usually on the arms and legs and often on the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet. It can include the rest of the body.

If these symptoms develop, seek medical attention immediately. It is important to inform the physician of any recent tick bites or exposure to

ticks. This information allows the physician to consider Rocky Mountain spotted fever as a possible diagnosis.

Rocky Mountain spotted fever can be fatal. If diagnosed early, however, it is often successfully treated with antibiotics.

**Ehrlichiosis** is a disease of humans and animals caused by bacteria that infect white blood cells and are transmitted by the bite of an infected tick. The lone star tick, the American dog tick (wood tick) and the deer tick (black-legged tick) have been associated with ehrlichiosis.

Symptoms typically begin between one and three weeks after exposure to an infected tick. Symptoms can be so mild that no medical care is sought, or the illness can be severe, life threatening or fatal.

Symptoms include —

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting

A rash may occur but is usually not present.

Any person experiencing illness with a fever after a tick bite should consult his/her physician and advise the physician the tick bite occurred.

Ehrlichiosis can be treated with certain antibiotics. Treatment should be considered if the diagnosis of ehrlichiosis is suspected, since delay in treatment while awaiting laboratory confirmation may increase the risk of severe disease.

**Lyme disease** is acquired from the bite of a tick infected with the Lyme disease bacterium. The tick that most commonly transmits this disease, the deer tick, acquires the bacteria when it feeds on infected wild animals, such as field mice or other mammals. It can then transmit the bacteria when feeding on a human.

Ticks can be small; they may be about the size of a pin head. Because they are so small you may not notice one that is attached to your body. Therefore, unless you are on the lookout for ticks, you may not realize you have been bitten.

Early symptoms of Lyme disease resemble a flu-like illness. A red rash may appear at the site of the bite anywhere from a few days to about a

month after you have been bitten. The rash expands, often to a large size. It is usually circular but can vary in shape, depending on its location. The center of the rash may clear as it enlarges, resulting in a ring-like appearance. The rash may be accompanied by symptoms such as fatigue, chills and fever, headache, muscle and joint pain, and swollen lymph nodes. Early in its course, Lyme disease is effectively treated with antibiotics.

If not treated, these symptoms may disappear or recur intermittently for several weeks, months or even years. Other complications — such as an irregular heartbeat or problems with the nervous system, including intermittent headaches, stiff neck, poor motor coordination, meningitis or encephalitis — also may occur after several weeks or months. Some patients may develop muscle weakness of the limbs or of the face — a drooping eyelid or corner of the mouth known as Bell's palsy. Joint pain and swelling (Lyme arthritis) in one or several large joints, especially the knees, may develop in late-stage Lyme disease.

Generally, antibiotic treatment for both early and late-stage Lyme disease is successful.

**Tularemia (rabbit fever)** is another disease that can be tickborne. It occurs infrequently in Illinois and is usually acquired by direct contact with infected rabbits. However, several cases of tularemia from tick or deerfly bites have occurred in recent years. A deerfly is a large fly, up to 1/2-inch long, that has a very painful bite and often leaves a drop of blood at the site of the bite. The American dog tick and the lone star tick are the ticks most commonly involved in the transmission of tularemia.

Tularemia is a bacterial infection. The first sign of this infection is a pimple-like bump, or papule, that appears at the site where the bacterium entered the skin. This papule, which may appear about three to five days after the bite of an infected tick or deerfly, usually develops into an open sore. There may be no apparent papule, but one or more swollen and painful lymph nodes may produce pus.

Other symptoms include —

- Abrupt onset of fever
- Chills
- Malaise and fatigue
- Headache
- Loss of appetite
- Swelling of lymph nodes closest to papule or open sore

If these symptoms develop, seek medical attention immediately. Inform

the physician of any recent tick or deerfly bites or exposure to rabbit carcasses to help the doctor make a correct diagnosis more quickly.

Tularemia can be treated successfully with certain antibiotics, but can be fatal if not treated.

### *Preventing Tickborne Disease*

The best way to protect yourself against tickborne diseases is to avoid tick bites. Follow these precautions if you live in or visit wooded or grassy areas:

- Wear light-colored, protective clothing — long-sleeved shirts, long trousers, boots or sturdy shoes, and a head covering.
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothes and to exposed skin (except the face). Be sure to wash treated skin after coming indoors. Use repellents containing permethrin to treat clothes (especially pants, socks and shoes) — but not skin. Both repel or kill ticks on contact. Always follow label directions; do not misuse or overuse repellents. Always supervise children in the use of repellents. Do not use products containing DEET on infants.
- Check yourself, children and other family members every two to three hours for ticks. Most ticks seldom attach quickly and rarely transmit disease until they have been attached four to six hours.
- Remove any tick promptly. Do not use bare hands. The mouthparts of a tick are shaped like tiny barbs and may remain embedded and lead to infection at the bite site if not removed properly. The best way to remove a tick is to grasp it with tweezers as close to the skin as possible and gently, but firmly, pull it straight out. Do not twist or jerk the tick. If tweezers are not available, grasp the tick with a piece of tissue or cloth or whatever can be used as a barrier between your fingers and the tick.
- Wash the bite area and your hands thoroughly with soap and water, and apply an antiseptic to the bite site.
- To dispose of ticks, flush them down a toilet, toss them into a nearby stream or burn them in a campfire. Do not try to squash a tick. Squeezing it may release germs from the tick.

## **MOSQUITOES**

The diseases most likely to be carried by mosquitoes in Illinois are St. Louis, West Nile and LaCrosse (California) encephalitis. These infections are most prevalent in June through October when mosquitoes are active.

Encephalitis is an inflammation of the brain and is often caused by viruses, including mosquito-borne viruses.

Fortunately, these viruses are transmitted only by a few types of mosquitoes, and usually only a small proportion of these mosquitoes actually carry the virus. Most mosquitoes that appear in Illinois are bothersome, but do not carry disease. Mosquitoes do not transmit human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the virus that causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

The northern house mosquito (*Culex pipiens*), the most common carrier of St. Louis encephalitis and West Nile virus, breeds in small, stagnant bodies of water and receptacles that contain water. It is infected with St. Louis encephalitis or West Nile virus by feeding on birds carrying the virus.

The tree-hole mosquito (*Aedes triseriatus*), the most common carrier of LaCrosse (California) encephalitis, is found in wooded areas and breeds in discarded tires and other items, as well as in tree holes. This mosquito is infected with LaCrosse encephalitis by feeding on infected chipmunks, squirrels and other small woodland animals carrying the virus.

The vast majority of those bitten by an infected mosquito experience mild or no symptoms of the disease. (Only 1 percent to 2 percent develop recognizable symptoms.) The symptoms of the three types of encephalitis are similar. Some persons may have mild symptoms such as a slight fever and headache. But severe infection may cause rapid onset of a severe headache, high fever, muscle aches, stiffness in the back of the neck, muscle incoordination, disorientation, convulsions and coma. Symptoms usually occur five to 15 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. These diseases are not transmitted from person to person.

Although anyone can be infected with a mosquito-borne virus, St. Louis encephalitis or West Nile virus usually occurs in persons older than 55 years of age. Most patients recover fully, although severe infection sometimes results in neurologic damage or death. LaCrosse encephalitis most often occurs in children. Symptoms are generally milder than those of St. Louis encephalitis or West Nile virus, and fatalities rarely occur.

To prevent mosquito-borne encephalitis, eliminate potential mosquito breeding sites near your home by following these suggestions:

- Remove or empty water in old tires, tin cans, buckets, drums, bottles or other places where mosquitoes might breed. Be sure to check clogged gutters and flat roofs that may have poor drainage. Make sure cisterns, cesspools, septic tanks, fire barrels, rain barrels and trash containers are covered tightly with a lid or with 16-mesh screen.

- Empty plastic wading pools at least once a week and store indoors when not in use. Unused swimming pools should be covered or drained during mosquito season. (Note: If you choose to drain your pool, be sure the hydrostatic relief valve is open in order to keep it from floating out of the ground if the water table rises.)
- Change the water in bird baths and plant pots or drip trays at least once each week.
- Store boats covered or upside down, or remove rainwater weekly.
- Empty your pet's water bowl daily.
- Level the ground around your home so water can run off and not collect in low spots. Fill in holes or depressions near your home that accumulate water.
- Fill in tree rot holes and hollow stumps that hold water.
- If you have an ornamental water garden, stock it with mosquito-eating fish (e.g., minnows, "mosquito fish," or goldfish). They eat mosquito larvae.
- Keep weeds and tall grass cut short; adult mosquitoes look for these shady places to rest during the hot daylight hours. Spray shrubbery and high weeds to kill adult insects. (Check the insecticide label to make sure the spray will not damage flowers or ornamental plants.)
- Small impoundments of water can be treated for mosquito larvae with "Bti," a bacterial insecticide. Many hardware stores carry doughnut-shaped Bti briquets for this purpose. Be sure to follow the insecticide label directions exactly.
- Some mosquito control methods are not very effective. Bug zappers are not effective in controlling biting mosquitoes. Various birds and bats will eat mosquitoes, but there is little scientific evidence that this reduces mosquitoes around homes.
- Community-wide mosquito abatement efforts can be quite effective if they are conducted as part of an integrated pest management program. This includes monitoring and draining or treating areas where mosquitoes breed – such as swamps and other low-lying areas.

People can protect themselves from mosquito bites by following these suggestions:

- Avoid places and times when mosquitoes bite. Generally, the peak biting periods occur just before and after sunset and again just

before dawn. Each species, however, has its own peak period of biting. Tree-hole and Asian tiger mosquitoes, for example, feed during daylight hours in or near shaded or wooded areas.

- Be sure door and window screens are tight-fitting and in good repair.
- Wear appropriate clothing. Long-sleeved tops and long pants made of tightly woven materials keep mosquitoes away from the skin. Be sure, too, that your clothing is light colored. Keep trouser legs tucked into boots or socks.
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors or in an unscreened structure and to protect small babies.
- Check to see that your mosquito repellent contains DEET, a chemical commonly found in these products. Generally, repellents with about 25 percent to 35 percent DEET work best for adults; use lower concentrations for children. Do not use repellents on infants. When outdoors, apply repellent sparingly to exposed skin or clothing, as indicated on the product's label.

## **RABIES**

The risk of encountering rabid animals may increase during the summer months when people spend more time working and relaxing outdoors.

In Illinois, skunks have traditionally been the main reservoir, or source, of rabies. However, most recent cases of rabies in other animals are probably caused by contact with rabid bats. Bats now account for the majority of rabid animal cases. Rabies is transmitted to wildlife, farm animals, family pets and people through contact with the saliva of a rabid animal, usually after a bite.

An animal need not be “foaming at the mouth” to have rabies. Other signs, such as difficulty walking or a general appearance of sickness, indicate an animal may be in the early stages of rabies.

One of the most important signs of rabies is a change in the animal's normal behavior. For example, if a wild animal that normally avoids human contact approaches a picnic area, campsite or farm house and appears tame or friendly, it may be rabid and should be avoided. On the other hand, if a domesticated and friendly animal (dog or cat) becomes hostile or aggressive without provocation, it, too, may be rabid.

When in areas where you are likely to encounter wildlife, stay away from all wild animals, as well as stray or unfamiliar dogs and cats. Due to the risk of rabies, make no effort to befriend or provide care for wild or stray animals, even if they appear friendly or in need of help. Call your county animal control office.

If you are bitten, scratched or have contact with the saliva of an animal that may be rabid, wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water, and contact a physician promptly. If exposed to an animal that is likely to be rabid, rabies vaccine and immune globulin should begin immediately. Your local health department will provide consultation on the need for rabies treatment.

Rabies vaccine **prevents** the disease but it is **not** a treatment for the disease. Once the symptoms of rabies develop, the disease cannot be treated and is almost always fatal. Fortunately, rabies has a comparatively long incubation period. When vaccine is given soon after exposure, your body has time to build up immunity to the disease before it develops. But the only way to prevent rabies after exposure is to receive the vaccine and immune globulin.

To protect against rabies—

- Avoid contact with all wild or stray animals, especially bats.
- Have the family dog, cat or ferret vaccinated against rabies.
- If bitten, wash wounds immediately.
- Seek medical attention and call your local public health agency. If a bat is found in your home or business, please contact your local health department before letting the bat go.
- If a bat bites someone or is found in the room with a very young child, someone who is sleeping or anyone who may be unaware about whether the bat bit them, the person should contact his/her local animal control and public health agencies. The bat will need to be safely collected and tested for rabies.

## **FOOD POISONING**

Picnics and cookouts top the list of summer activities. Keep in mind, however, you must take special precautions when preparing and serving food during warm weather if you are to avoid foodborne illnesses such as salmonellosis.

Foodborne illnesses occur when disease organisms are present on food or introduced by the food handler from unwashed hands or contaminated equipment and utensils. Follow these guidelines to help prevent foodborne illness:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before handling any food and especially after handling raw poultry, meat or eggs.

- Cover cuts or open sores on your hands with a tape bandage and do not allow them to contact food or surfaces that will contact food.
- Thoroughly rinse fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Do not sneeze or cough over food.
- Use separate cutting boards or surfaces for raw meat, salad, vegetables or other foods served without cooking. Thoroughly wash all utensils and cutting boards used for raw meat and poultry. Some cutting surfaces can harbor bacteria in their ridges.
- Use separate bowls for raw poultry, meat or eggs to prevent them from coming into contact with foods served without cooking.
- Cook foods thoroughly, especially ground beef, poultry and pork. While rare beef is sometimes popular, disease-causing organisms can survive in undercooked meat and are especially likely to have been introduced in the slaughter process and mixed through the meat during grinding.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.

Make sure to keep raw meat, fish or poultry cold until it is cooked. Be sure it does not come in contact with ready-to-eat food (e.g., cheese, sliced onions or tomatoes, bread). Also, never place cooked meats on the same plate or pan that held raw meats.

Do not serve hot foods until they are heated to between 140°F and 165°F or higher. Do not leave food unrefrigerated longer than one hour at a time or the chances of dangerous bacterial growth increase. Store and serve cold foods at temperatures below 40°F. In other words, do not let potentially hazardous foods reach that intermediate temperature at which microorganisms grow best — between 40°F and 140°F. Some popular cold picnic foods are potentially hazardous and require special care. Be particularly careful in handling —

- Any homemade food that contains eggs, mayonnaise or salad dressing, such as potato salad
- Deviled eggs, and egg, chicken, tuna and potato salads. Dishes requiring a lot of handling are at greater risk of harboring dangerous bacteria when allowed to reach intermediate temperatures.
- Luncheon meats, sandwich fillings and other ready-to-eat protein foods
- Meat, fish or poultry
- Milk and other dairy products

Refrigerate these foods immediately after they are prepared and until they are served. Use insulated coolers with ice or cold packs to transport and store these foods.

After cooking meat, fish or poultry for salads or sandwiches that will be eaten cold (such as roast beef or chicken), cool quickly. Do this by dividing into smaller portions and refrigerating at once.

Foods served hot — especially creamed or scalloped dishes containing milk, eggs, cornstarch or flour — should be cooked just before picnic time and kept hot and covered until served.

Water for drinking, cooking and dishwashing must come from a safe and approved source. Bring water with you if safe water will not be available at the picnic site.

Place leftovers from potentially hazardous hot and cold foods in separate coolers on ice. Serve leftovers either very cold (right from the cooler) or very hot (reheated to 165°F or hotter).

The symptoms of most types of food poisoning include severe cramps, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Symptoms begin from one-half hour to three days after eating contaminated food.

Most cases of foodborne illness are mild, and the symptoms disappear in a day or two. If symptoms are severe or last longer than two days, contact a physician.

### *Picnic Microbes*

<b>Microbe</b>	<b>Associated Foods</b>	<b>Onset</b>	<b>Symptoms</b>
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> (Staph)	Custards, sandwiches, meat products	2-6 hrs.	Abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting
<i>Salmonella</i> spp.	Poultry, eggs	12-16 hours	Nausea, vomiting, cramps
<i>Clostridium botulinum</i> (botulism)	Home-canned foods, high-acid foods	1-3 days	Central nervous system paralysis, respiratory failure
<i>Escherichia coli</i> (O157:H7)	Undercooked or raw ground beef	3-4 days	Nausea, vomiting, cramps, bloody diarrhea

<i>Vibrio cholerae</i> (cholera)	Raw/undercooked seafood	6 hours-5 days	Nausea, vomiting, severe diarrhea, dehydration
<i>Campylobacter</i> spp.	Raw milk, raw or undercooked meat	2-11 days	Abdominal pain, profuse diarrhea
Hepatitis A	Infected food handlers	2-6 weeks	Jaundice, liver disease

## HOME CANNING

Home-canned foods can be a source of foodborne illnesses that may range from very mild to severe and, in extreme cases, result in death.

Botulism, caused by a bacterium, is the most serious of foodborne illnesses. In recent years, the source of nearly all botulism cases has been home-canned foods.

Bacterial spores are common in the soil and can be found on vegetables, fruits and even meat and fish. If home-canned food is not processed at a high enough temperature and pressure, bacterial spores can grow and produce a lethal toxin.

Acids help destroy bacteria, so foods high in acidity (most fruits) do not require as much heat during canning as do foods with low acid content (most vegetables).

To preserve low acid foods (vegetables), heat-process them under pressure at 240F. Ten pounds of pressure in a steam-pressure canner corresponds to 240F. Every particle of food in each jar must reach 240F and stay at that temperature long enough to destroy all disease-causing organisms, usually at least 10 minutes.

Certain hybrid varieties of fruits and vegetables, especially tomatoes, have a lower acid content. You may need to add vinegar or increase the processing time for these hybrids.

**High acid foods** (fruits) must be boiled at 212F to destroy disease-causing organisms.

Take the following precautions when canning foods:

- Wash hands, work and cutting surfaces and all utensils thoroughly.
- Use only high quality, unbruised and unspoiled products for canning.
- Scrub raw fruits and vegetables thoroughly.

- Check jars and lids for chips or defects and do not use those that are defective.
- Use only lids, seals and jars manufactured specifically for home canning.
- Follow proper canning procedures carefully.
- Do not reuse sealing lids. Purchase new seals, rings and lids.
- Test the seal according to the manufacturer's instructions. If any lids fail to seal, read the instructions again and reprocess the food until the lids seal properly.

Maintain equipment and properly store home-canned foods:

- Clean the gauge on a pressure cooker periodically.
- Check the dial gauge regularly.
- Clean the canner's petcock and safety valve openings regularly by pulling a string or narrow strip of cloth through them.
- Store canned goods in a cool, dry place away from heat sources, such as hot water pipes or sunlight, and from moisture that could rust lids.

Generally, signs of spoilage are easy to spot: mold, leaks, bubbling, bulging lids, marked discoloration or unpleasant odors. If any of these signs appear, destroy the food or dispose of it out of the reach of children and pets. **Do not taste** this food.

## **HEAT-RELATED CONDITIONS**

**Heat exhaustion**, one of the more mild summer health problems, results from spending too much time in the heat. It occurs when perspiration leads to excess loss of fluids and salts (electrolytes). Even if not directly in the sun, a person can lose too much fluid staying outdoors too long on a hot day or spending too much time in an overly hot house. It is not necessarily caused by excessive body temperatures, because the body's core temperature remains normal or falls below the norm. When exposure to extreme heat is combined with strenuous physical activity, the risk of heat exhaustion becomes even greater.

Symptoms of heat exhaustion are —

- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Cool, clammy skin
- Heavy perspiration

- Light-headedness
- Severe headache
- Shallow breathing
- Muscle tremors, cramping

If these symptoms occur, lay the person on his back in the coolest nearby place, loosen any tight clothing, lower his head slightly, raise his feet and get medical attention immediately.

To prevent heat exhaustion, drink extra amounts of liquids to replace body fluids lost through perspiration. Water, fruit juices or fruit-based drinks, such as lemonade, are preferable to tea, soft drinks, coffee or alcohol. Beverages that contain caffeine or alcohol often result in more frequent urination, which increases the body's loss of fluids.

Other precautions can help you to avoid heat exhaustion:

- Stay indoors in a cool place as much as possible.
- If possible, schedule strenuous activity – jogging, bike riding, lawn mowing, etc. – during morning or evening hours when the temperature is cooler.
- If you must spend time outdoors, pace yourself and take frequent water breaks. Plan breaks in the shade or coolest place available and make sure ample supplies of water or fruit drinks are handy.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing that does not interfere with the evaporation of perspiration.

If you begin to feel dizzy or nauseated or develop a headache, go immediately to the nearest shaded or cool place and sit or lie down. If the symptoms are not relieved within a few minutes, or if they become worse, seek medical attention immediately.

**Heatstroke** is caused by prolonged exposure to high temperatures. Just sitting or lying too long in the heat can result in heatstroke, which can be fatal and should be considered a medical emergency.

Symptoms of heatstroke are —

- Headache
- Red, dry face
- Skin hot to touch
- Body temperature of 105F or more
- Strong pulse
- Loss of consciousness in extreme cases
- Seizures, irregular heartbeat

If any of these symptoms occur, place the person in a semi-sitting position to reduce the amount of “hot” blood going to the head. Loosen

or remove patient's clothing, spray body and head with tepid (not cold) water, and cool by large fans to maximize evaporative heat loss. Seek medical attention immediately. If the person has a seizure, protect him or her from striking objects and DO NOT put anything in the mouth.

Heatstroke occurs most often in the spring and early summer, before the body adapts to higher temperatures. High humidity can increase the risk because it keeps the body from cooling itself as effectively.

Heat exhaustion does not always precede heatstroke. Athletes and the elderly are more prone to heatstroke.

To avoid heatstroke during the hot summer months, stay out of the sun as much as possible and keep cool — preferably in an air conditioned place. If air conditioning is not available, use fans or open windows to circulate the air. (However, keep blinds or curtains closed when sunlight is coming directly in the windows.) Take frequent cold baths or showers and try to avoid cooking or baking during the hottest part of the day.

**Heat cramps** are muscle pains or spasms — usually in the abdomen, arms or legs — that affect people who sweat a lot during strenuous activity. This sweating depletes the body's salt and moisture. The low salt level in the muscles causes the painful cramps. Heat cramps also may be a symptom of heat exhaustion. If you have heart problems or are on a low sodium diet, get medical attention for heat cramps.

If medical attention is not necessary, take these steps:

- Stop all activity and sit quietly in a cool place.
- Drink clear juice or a sports beverage.
- Do not return to strenuous activity for a few hours after the cramps subside because further exertion may lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- Seek medical attention for heat cramps if they do not subside in one hour.

## **SUN EXPOSURE**

Did you know that just a few serious sunburns can increase the risk of a child, teen or young adult developing skin cancer later in life? A person doesn't have to be at the pool, beach or on vacation to get too much sun. Their skin needs protection from the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays whenever they are outdoors.

There are five easy options for protection from the sun:

- **Seek shade.** UV rays are strongest and most harmful during midday — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. — so it is best to plan indoor activities then. If this is not possible, seek shade under a tree, an umbrella or a pop-up tent. Use these options to prevent sunburn, not to seek relief once it has happened. UV rays, of course, are present on bright and sunny days, but they can also penetrate through cloud and haze cover, making cloudy and overcast days dangerous as well.
- **Cover up.** Clothing that covers the skin helps to protect against UV rays. Although a long-sleeved shirt and long pants with a tight weave are best, they are not always practical. A T-shirt, long shorts or a beach cover-up are good choices, too, but it's wise to double up on protection by applying sunscreen or staying in the shade when possible.
- **Get a hat.** Hats with a wide brim to shade the face, head, ears and neck are great protection. Baseball caps are popular, but they do not protect the ears and neck. If wearing a cap, be sure to protect exposed areas with sunscreen.
- **Grab shades.** Sunglasses protect your eyes from UV rays, which can lead to cataracts later in life. Look for sunglasses that wrap around and block as close to 100 percent of both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays as possible.
- **Rub on sunscreen.** Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 or higher and with both UVA and UVB protection. For most effective protection, apply sunscreen generously 30 minutes before going outdoors. Don't forget to protect ears, noses, lips and tops of feet.

Skin cancer is the most common kind of cancer in the United States. Research indicates it may be related to increased voluntary exposure to the sun's UV rays. Unprotected skin can be damaged by the sun's UV rays in as little as 15 minutes, yet it can take up to 12 hours for skin to show the full effects of sun exposure. So, skin that looks "a little pink" now may actually progress into "red" sunburn hours later.

Serious sunburns, especially during childhood and adolescence, can also increase the chances of developing malignant melanoma — one of the most serious forms of skin cancer and the one that causes most skin cancer-related deaths. Although most people are aware of the danger of UV exposure, it is estimated that only one-third take steps to protect their skin from the sun.

# *Summer Weather Warnings*

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Every day millions of people are busy with their regular routines — going to work, attending school, running errands. Occasionally, though, the unexpected will happen: a tornado, a flood or other weather-related emergency changes everyone's daily routines. These natural disasters do not have to have tragic endings, however, if people are prepared beforehand to deal with their aftermath.

Many times in the wake of a natural disaster, local officials and emergency response personnel may be overwhelmed and unable to reach people right away. So, after most disasters, a family should be prepared to be self-sufficient for at least three days. This may mean providing for your own shelter, first aid, water and sanitation.

Being prepared for a natural disaster requires planning. The Federal Emergency Management Agency recognized this when it created the Family Protection Program. The program encourages individuals and families to take action to increase their ability to cope with, or even survive, a disaster before it occurs. The program focuses on motivating people to develop a family disaster plan.

In Illinois, the Family Protection Program is promoted by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA). IEMA offers many publications that can assist people in developing a family disaster plan. For more information, contact your local emergency management agency.

## **TORNADOES**

A tornado is a violent storm with whirling winds of up to 300 miles per hour. It appears as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud, gray to black, that extends toward the ground from the base of a thundercloud. A tornado spins like a top and may sound like the roaring of a locomotive or airplane. These short-lived storms are the most violent of all storms and the most destructive.

**A tornado watch** means tornadoes may occur in or near your area. Listen to local radio and television stations for information and advice. Keep the telephone lines clear for emergency calls. Watch the sky to the south and southwest for revolving, funnel-shaped clouds. Report these immediately to your local police department, sheriff's office or weather service.

If a **tornado warning** is issued for your area, take shelter immediately. A warning means a tornado has been sighted or indicated by radar and may strike in your vicinity.

During a tornado, protect yourself from being struck by falling objects, injured by flying debris or blown away. The best protection is an underground shelter, cave or steel-framed building. If none of these are available, there are other places to take refuge:

- At home, go to an underground storm cellar or basement. If your home has no basement, go to a corner of your home and take cover under a sturdy workbench, desk or table (but not underneath heavy appliances on the floor above). Or, take cover in the center part of the house, on the lowest floor, in a small room such as a closet or bathroom. Stay away from windows to avoid flying debris. Do not remain in a trailer or mobile home if a tornado is approaching; take cover in a nearby shelter or lie flat in the nearest lowland area or ditch.
- If you are at work in an office building, go to an interior hallway on the lowest floor or to a designated shelter area.
- If you are at school, follow the instructions of school authorities. Instructions usually involve taking shelter in interior hallways on the lowest floor and staying out of structures with wide roofs, such as auditoriums and gymnasiums.
- If you are outside in open country, take cover by lying flat in the nearest depression, such as a ditch, culvert, excavation or ravine and cover your head with your arms.

## **FLOODS**

Floods are the most common and widespread of all natural hazards. Some floods develop over a period of days, but flash floods can produce raging waters in just a few minutes. Water runs off steeper ground very rapidly, causing natural drainage systems to overflow with rushing floodwaters and a deadly cargo of rocks, mud, smashed trees and other debris.

Remember, floods may occur in very small streams, gullies, creeks, culverts, dry streambeds or low-lying ground that may appear harmless in dry weather.

Wherever you live, be aware of potential flooding hazards. If you live in a low-lying area, near water or downstream from a dam, you should be prepared for a flood.

Know the National Weather Service terms that warn of potential flooding conditions broadcast on radio and television and through local government emergency personnel:

- **Flood forecast** means rainfall is heavy enough to cause rivers to overflow their banks.

- **Flood warning**, or a forecast of impending floods, describes the affected river or lake, the severity of the flooding (minor, moderate or major) and when and where the flooding may begin.
- **Flash flood watch** means current or expected heavy rains may cause sudden flash flooding in specified areas. Be alert to the possible emergency, which may require immediate action.
- **Flash flood warning** is announced when flash flooding is occurring or expected along certain streams and designated areas.

Find out how many feet your property is above or below possible flood levels so you can determine if it may be at risk when predicted flood levels are broadcast. Careful preparation and prompt response can help ensure your safety and reduce property loss.

If flooding is likely and time permits, move essential items and furniture to the upper floors of your house. Disconnect any electrical appliances that cannot be moved, but do not touch them if you are wet or standing in water.

Standard homeowner's insurance policies do not cover flood losses, but flood insurance is available in participating communities through the federally sponsored National Flood Insurance Program. Contact a local licensed insurance broker or agent for more information. Usually there is a five-day waiting period before coverage takes effect, so do not wait until the last minute.

Your personal safety also is important. During periods of heavy rainfall when flash floods are likely, remember these safety tips:

- Stay away from natural streambeds, gullies and other drainage channels during and after rainstorms.
- If you live in a low-lying area, know where high ground is and how to get there as quickly as possible.
- Stay out of flooded areas. The water may still be rising and the current could be swift.
- Abandon stalled vehicles in flooded areas if you can do so safely.
- If you are caught in floodwaters, keep a flashlight or other light source with you to attract help.

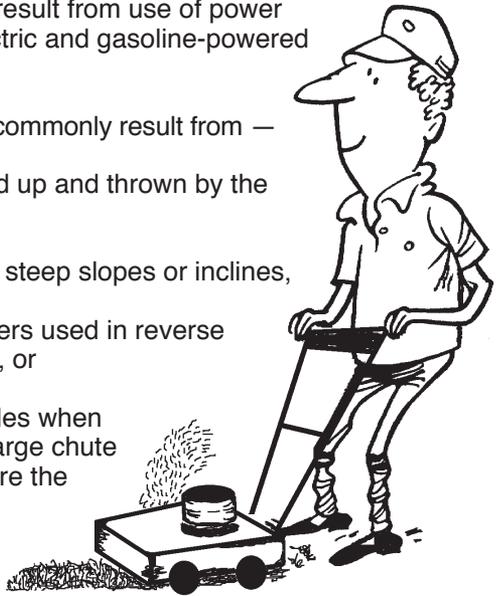
These tips and more are contained in "After the Flood." Copies are available from IDPH, Division of Communications, at 217-782-5750, TTY (hearing impaired use only) 800-547-0466.

# Lawn & Garden Implement Hazards

Each year, many serious injuries result from use of power mowers, string trimmers, and electric and gasoline-powered hedge trimmers.

Injuries from power mowers most commonly result from —

- rocks and other objects picked up and thrown by the mower,
- riding mowers tipping over on steep slopes or inclines,
- garden tractors or riding mowers used in reverse gear that run over bystanders, or
- hand contact with mower blades when clearing grass from the discharge chute or adjusting the machine before the blades have fully stopped.



Most string trimmers injuries are the result of —

- debris or objects picked up and thrown by the trimmer,
- failure to wear appropriate protective clothing and eye and ear protection, or
- unsafe handling of the trimmer or of fuel.

Hedge-trimmer accidents most often occur when the operator —

- changes hand position while the trimmer is running,
- uses a trimmer with only one handle or holds a two-handled trimmer with one hand, or
- attempts to hold the cord away from the blade.

The following safety tips may help you avoid accidents with lawn and garden implements.

## **LAWN MOWERS**

Lawn mowers are associated with approximately 80,000 injuries annually in the United States. To avoid injury to yourself or to others, follow these simple precautions:

- When buying a power mower, make sure it has a rear guard to protect hands and feet from blades and a downward-aimed discharge chute so debris is less likely to hit anyone nearby.
- Before mowing, pick up or rake up litter and other objects — wires, nails, rocks, twigs and glass — from the area to be mowed. The blade of a power mower can reach a speed of 200 miles per hour and can hurl objects as far as 50 feet.
- Wear sturdy, comfortable shoes with enclosed toes, safety glasses, gloves, long-sleeved shirt and long pants.
- Do not allow children or pets in the area you are mowing.
- Before unclogging or adjusting the mower, turn it off and disconnect the spark plug wire or electric plug.
- Never leave a running lawn mower unattended.
- Never carry small children on a riding mower.
- Never allow children to operate a mower.
- Mow across slopes if using a walk-behind mower; drive a riding mower up and down slopes.
- Do not refuel while the mower is running or the engine is hot.
- Do not smoke near a power mower or gasoline.

## **STRING TRIMMERS**

These safety rules can help you avoid injury while using a string trimmer:

- Wear appropriate protective gear, including safety goggles, hearing protection and gloves. Persons who suffer from hay fever may want to wear a disposable mask to reduce the amount of allergenic particles inhaled.
- Choose clothing that fits trimly and has no strings or dangling straps that could catch in the trimmer or in the underbrush. Avoid ties and jewelry. Wear long pants and sturdy shoes with non-slip soles.

- Be sure you have read the operator's and safety manuals before using the trimmer. It is important to be familiar with the controls, particularly with how to stop the unit and shut off the engine.
- Keep the area where you will be working clear of bystanders, children and pets. Manufacturers recommend that no one enter the operating danger zone, an area 50 feet in radius. Even beyond this zone, there is danger of eye injury from thrown objects.
- Never operate the tool without good visibility and light.
- Keep the unit and attachments in good working condition. Tighten loose fasteners and replace any missing fasteners before using the unit. Check the cutting head assembly before each use.
- Always use both hands on the handles. Do not operate one-handed.

## **HEDGE TRIMMERS**

If using gasoline-powered or electric hedge trimmers, follow these safety guidelines:

- Buy a trimmer that has the cutting teeth and guard close enough together so your finger cannot fit between them.
- Be sure the trimmer has two handles; one should be a wide forward handle high above the cutting blade.
- Make sure the trimmer is light enough to handle easily.
- If using an electric hedge trimmer, use a heavy duty three-wire extension cord with a three-pronged plug. Make sure the extension cord is moisture-resistant and in good repair.
- Keep children and others away from the working area.
- **Do not** stand on a chair or ladder to trim hedges or bushes.
- **Do not** clean or adjust the trimmer while it is plugged in.

# Poisonous Plants

As the temperature rises, children spend more time outdoors and within easy reach of yard and garden plants and mushrooms, some of which may be poisonous. Many common house and garden plants — such as rhubarb, dieffenbachia, rhododendron, daphne, jimsonweed, oleander, cherry and peach leaves, yew and nightshade — are poisonous.

There is no safe way to determine if plants or mushrooms are poisonous. It is, however, simple to learn what plants may be harmful and to take precautions to keep them out of the reach of curious children.

Do not leave children unattended if poisonous plants grow around the area where they play. Teach children never to put any plants or berries in their mouths. Many varieties of plant life that animals eat safely may be harmful to humans. For example —

- The pretty oleander, grown indoors and out, is among the most deadly of plants — so deadly a child can die after ingesting a single leaf.
- Just a few berries from the daphne, a plant often found in rock gardens, can be fatal to a child.

In some instances, only parts of a plant are poisonous. Rhubarb is a good example. The stalk is edible and delicious, but the leaves are potentially poisonous and can cause death.

Following is a list of poisonous common house and garden plants, their toxic parts and symptoms of poisoning after ingestion:

## HOUSE PLANTS

Plant	Toxic Part	Symptoms
Castor bean	Seeds	Burning sensation in mouth and throat. Two to four beans may cause death.
Dieffenbachia or dumbcane, caladium and elephant's ear	All parts	Intense burning and irritation of the mouth, tongue, lips. Death occurs when mouth and tongue swell and block air passage to the throat.
Hyacinth, narcissus, daffodil	Bulbs	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea even when eaten in small amounts.

Rosary pea,  
jequirity bean,  
crabs eye,  
precatory bean

Seeds

Among the most highly toxic of plants. Severe stomach irritation, incoordination, paralysis. Less than one seed thoroughly chewed can kill an adult.

## **FLOWER GARDEN PLANTS**

<b>Plant</b>	<b>Toxic Part</b>	<b>Symptoms</b>
Aconite, monkshood, wolfsbane	Roots, flowers	Intense nausea, vomiting, convulsions. Although deaths due to eating small amounts of garden aconite have occurred, poisoning is rare.
Autumn crocus	All parts, especially bulbs	Burning pain in mouth, stomach irritation. Children have been poisoned by eating flowers.
Foxglove	All parts, especially leaves, flowers, seeds	One of the sources of the drug digitalis, used to strengthen the heartbeat. May cause dangerously irregular heartbeat, stomach upset, mental confusion. Convulsions and death may result.
Iris	Underground roots (rhizomes) and developed leaves	Severe stomach upset from moderate amounts. However, the unpleasant taste usually prevents consumption of large amounts.
Lily-of-the-valley	Leaves, flowers, fruit (red berries)	Source of digitalis-like drugs. Moderate amounts may cause irregular heartbeat, stomach upset, confusion.

Nicotiana, tobacco (wild and cultivated)	Leaves	Nausea, diarrhea, headache, confusion, lack of movement and convulsions. Poisonous or lethal amounts after ingesting cured, smoking or chewing tobacco, from foliage of field-grown tobacco or from foliage of garden variety.
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## VEGETABLE GARDEN PLANTS

Plant	Toxic Part	Symptoms
Potato	Vines, sprouts (green parts), spoiled potatoes	Vomiting, headache. Death has occurred from eating green parts. To prevent poisoning, remove green spots before cooking. Discard spoiled potatoes.
Rhubarb	Leaf blade	Stomach pain, vomiting, convulsions. Without treatment, permanent kidney damage or death may result.

## ORNAMENTAL PLANTS

Plant	Toxic Part	Symptoms
Atropa belladonna, deadly nightshade	All parts	Produces atropine. Fever, rapid heartbeat, dilated pupils, hot and dry flushed skin.
Carolina jessamine, yellow jessamine	All parts, especially flowers	May cause muscle weakness, nervous system depression. Death is from respiratory failure. Children have been poisoned by consuming the flower nectar.
Common privet	Black or blue berries, leaves	Stomach irritation, vomiting.
Daphne	All parts, including bark, berries	A few berries may produce stomach burning or ulcers, vomiting, diarrhea. Death may result. This plant is particularly dangerous to children.

English ivy	Leaves, berries	Excitement, difficulty breathing, coma eventually.
Golden chain, laburnum	Seeds, pods, flowers	Excitement, intestinal irritation, severe nausea with convulsions and, if large amounts consumed, coma and death.
Heath family (laurels, rhododendrons, azaleas)	All parts	Salivation, nausea, vomiting, depression. "Tea" made from 2 oz. of leaves has caused poisoning. Larger amounts may be fatal.
Lantana	Unripe berries, leaves	May be lethal to children, causing circulatory collapse and muscular weakness; stomach irritation in less severe cases.
Oleander	All parts	Extremely poisonous. Affects heart and digestive system. Meat roasted on its branches has caused death. A few leaves can be fatal.
Wisteria	Seeds, pods	Pods look like pea pods. One or two seeds may cause mild to severe stomach distress.
Yew (English, Japanese)	Needles, bark, berries	Ingestion of foliage weakens and may stop the heart. Small amounts may cause trembling, difficulty breathing. The berry's pulp is slightly toxic, if at all. But the berry's black seeds may be toxic.

## **TREES**

<b>Tree</b>	<b>Toxic Part</b>	<b>Symptoms</b>
Apple	Seeds	May be fatal if consumed in large quantities.
Black locust	Bark, foliage, young twigs, seeds	Stomach upset with vomiting and diarrhea after ingestion.

Buckeye, horse chestnut	Sprouts, nuts	Stomach upset, confusion, other nervous symptoms. May be fatal to children. The unpleasant taste prevents consumption of large quantities.
Chinaberry tree	Berries, leaves	Nausea, vomiting, excitement or depression, feelings of suffocation. May be fatal.
Elderberry	Roots, stems, leaves	Children have been poisoned by eating roots or using stems as blowguns. Berries are least toxic part but cause nausea if too many are eaten raw. Proper cooking destroys toxic chemical.
Jatropha (purge nut, curcas bean, peregrina, psychic nut)	Seeds, oil, leaves	Nausea, violent vomiting, abdominal pain.
Oak	All parts	Eating large amounts of any part raw may damage kidneys. A few acorns probably have little effect. Boiling or roasting removes tannin to make edible.
Wild black cherry, chokecherry, black cherry	Leaves, pits, bark	Poisoning and death have occurred in children who ate large amounts of berries without removing the pits. Pits or seeds, foliage and bark contain hydrocyanic acid (prussic acid or cyanide).
Other fruit trees	Pits	Beware of the pits of wild and cultivated cherries, peaches, apricots and some almond varieties. Pits and leaves eaten in small amounts should cause little harm.

Yellow oleander,  
be-still tree

All parts,  
especially  
kernels of the  
fruit

Found in southern states.  
Frequent source of serious  
or lethal poisoning.  
One or two fruits may be  
fatal. Symptoms similar to  
digitalis poisoning.

## **PLANTS IN WOODED AREAS**

### **Plant**

Baneberry,  
doll's eyes

### **Toxic Part**

Red or white  
berries, roots  
foliage

### **Symptoms**

Acute stomach cramps,  
headache, vomiting,  
dizziness, delirium.

Jack-in-the-pulpit,  
skunk cabbage

All parts,  
especially roots

Contains calcium oxalate  
crystals that cause burning  
and severe irritation of  
mouth and tongue.

Mayapple,  
mandrake

Roots, foliage,  
unripe fruit

Large doses may cause  
symptoms of stomach flu.  
Ripe fruit is least toxic part,  
but may affect bowels.  
Cooked mayapples are safe.

Water hemlock,  
cowbane

All parts,  
especially the  
root

Salivation, tremors, delirium,  
violent convulsions. One  
mouthful of root may kill an  
adult. Many persons,  
especially children, have  
died after eating this plant.  
Roots are mistaken for wild  
parsnip or artichoke.

## **PLANTS IN FIELDS**

### **Plants**

Death camas

### **Toxic Part**

Bulbs, blossoms

### **Symptoms**

Depression, stomach pain,  
vomiting, diarrhea.

Jimsonweed,  
thornapple

All parts,  
especially seeds  
and leaves

Thirst, hyperirritability of  
nervous system, disturbed  
vision, delirium. Four to five  
grams of crude leaf or seed  
is fatal to a child. Poisoning  
occurs from sucking nectar  
from tube of flower or from  
eating fruits with seeds.

Nightshades, European bittersweet, horse nettle	All parts, especially unripe berries	Stomach upset, stupor, loss of sensation, possibly death. Children have been poisoned after ingesting a moderate amount of unripe berries. Ripe berries are much less toxic.
Poison hemlock	Root, foliage, seeds	Gradual weakening of muscles and death from paralysis of lungs. Root resembles wild carrot. Seeds are mistaken for anise.
Pokeweed, pigeonberry	Roots, berries, foliage	Burning sensation in mouth and throat, stomach upset, cramps.

## **MUSHROOMS**

Although most mushrooms growing in gardens, fields and lawns are non-poisonous, the same rules that apply to other plants apply here. Never eat any mushroom before identifying it. Instruct children never to eat wild mushrooms.

If you suspect that someone you know has eaten any part of a poisonous plant or mushroom, seek medical attention immediately or call the Illinois Poison Center at 800-222-1222 or TTY 312-906-6185. Trained personnel are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.