



News Release

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Tips for a safe summer

OLYMPIA — As many prepare for Fourth of July gatherings and summer outings, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) wants to remind folks to stay healthy and celebrate safely.

“Have a safe summer. Be aware of hazards and take precautions to protect yourself and those around you,” said Umair A. Shah MD, MPH, Secretary of Health. “A little planning can make a big difference.”

Some easy ways to prepare for a safe and healthy summer include:

- **Practice water safety.** Always supervise young children playing in or near the water. Wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket that fits you when swimming, kayaking, paddle boarding, or boating. Remember that even water that seems warm on the surface can lead to cold water shock that will incapacitate good swimmers.
- **Learn how to beat the heat and avoid heat-related health problems.** Never leave any person or pet in a parked vehicle. Drink plenty of fluids and stay in air-conditioned spaces when possible. Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing, and avoid being outside during the hottest parts of the day. Use high SPF sunblock, even when the sky is cloudy or overcast. Check in on family, friends and neighbors who are elderly or may need help, and make sure pets have access to water and protection from the heat.
- **Follow food safety tips and remember to wash your hands.** Protect your family and friends from foodborne illnesses. Wash your hands with soap and sanitize all cooking and eating surfaces. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold, cook foods to safe internal temperatures, and put food away after no more than two hours at room temperature. Report any foodborne illnesses to your local health department.

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- **Prevent fireworks injuries.** Watch fireworks displays from a safe distance. Always have an adult supervise fireworks activities and do not allow young children to play with or ignite fireworks. Call 911 immediately if someone is injured.
- **For a non-serious injury or illness, consider visiting your primary care provider or an urgent care clinic** if you need medical attention. Going to the emergency department only for true emergencies can help reduce the impact on our hospitals during busy times like holidays.
- **Keep protecting yourself and others from COVID-19.** Ensure you are up to date on vaccinations and boosters. Wear a mask in crowded spaces and while traveling. Take a COVID-19 test if you feel sick, have been in contact with someone with COVID-19, or are planning to attend an event or travel. If you test positive, stay home to help protect your community.

By taking steps to prepare, we can all do our part to help keep our communities safe during the holiday weekend and beyond.

The [DOH website](#) is your source for a *healthy dose of information*. [Find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#). Sign up for the DOH blog, [Public Health Connection](#).

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