



Summer is (still) here, and it's time to make the most of what's left of it! From backyard barbecues to boat trips, there's no shortage of fun in the sun. But with this year's blistering weather comes increased potential risks to your health and safety. Read on for essential tips to keep you safe while enjoying what the rest of the season has to offer.

Beat the Heat, Not the Odds SUMMER SAFETY TIPS

Food Poisoning-Free Picnics & Gatherings

Hot weather creates a breeding ground for bacteria. Even if you know the rules for keeping food safe, it is easy to become distracted and forget about them in the midst of a great time.

Here are some quick tips to banish the bacteria from your outdoor events.



- Always separate raw and cooked foods.
- Prep safe: pack raw meat, poultry, and seafood in sealed containers to prevent their juices from contaminating other foods.
- Keep raw meat, poultry, and seafood chilled until ready to grill—in the fridge or in an insulated cooler, below 40°F



- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before preparing or eating food, and after using the restroom or touching raw meat.
- Have serving spoons, ladles, and tongs available to prevent guests' hands from touching the food while serving themselves.



- Pack up the party: Don't leave the picnic food out all day! Cold foods that have been sitting out at room temperature for 2 hours or more (one hour if it's above 90°F) should not be eaten.
- Put leftovers in the freezer or refrigerator within two hours of cooking—or one hour if above 90°F outside.

Miniature (Potentially Deadly) Menaces

There are two serious dangers you may encounter outside this summer that warrant awareness and extra precaution: brain-eating amoeba and infected mosquitoes. Here's what you need to know:

In the Water

Be aware of the threat of *Naegleria fowleri*, the brain-eating amoeba, when swimming in very warm freshwater ponds, lakes, rivers, etc. (above 80 degrees Fahrenheit). The amoeba enters the body through the nose when swimming or diving in contaminated water. Brain infections from this amoeba are nearly always fatal. While rare, the amoeba can also be present in untreated or poorly-treated water, such as splash pads, pools, or surf parks.

- ❁ Avoid swimming in freshwater lakes, rivers, or hot springs when the water temperature is at its peak (80-90 degrees).
- ❁ Wear a nose clip if swimming in very warm freshwater bodies. *Naegleria fowleri* is not a danger if swallowed but only if it goes into your nose and directly to your brain.
- ❁ Avoid stirring up the sediment at the bottom (where the amoeba is commonly found) of very warm water by walking, wading, or jumping in shallow areas.

In the Air

Rising global temperatures have allowed mosquitoes to survive longer and expand to new habitats. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) issued a health alert in June 2024 for an increased risk of dengue virus (DENV) infections, which are caused by mosquito bites from infected mosquitoes.

- ❁ Use mosquito repellent on exposed skin. Deet-based repellents are the most effective.
- ❁ Limit outdoor activities during dusk and dawn when mosquitos are most active.
- ❁ Regularly empty any containers that collect and hold water, such as flowerpots and buckets.



Carbon Monoxide and Boating

What You Need to Know

Being towed behind a boat is fun, but it can turn deadly fast. Carbon monoxide, an odorless, tasteless invisible killer, lurks in the exhaust fumes of your boat's engine. When a person is towed too close—whether wakesurfing, tubing, or on a board or raft—it can trap these poisonous gases, putting riders, especially kids, at serious risk.

Always check your boat's manual for safe towing distances. Remember, idling or slow speeds can increase carbon monoxide levels. Protect yourself and your loved ones by staying far enough away from that exhaust.

Sources:
cdc.gov
uscgboating.org

Safety Tips for Smooth Sailing

Pay Attention

Boating is supposed to be fun, but the water can be a treacherous place if you're not paying attention. With swimmers, kayakers, and other boats zipping around, it's easy to get distracted. Remember, just because the water looks calm doesn't mean it's safe. Keep your eyes peeled for hidden hazards and other boaters.

Back Off the Booze (and Beer)

And let's talk about alcohol. If you wouldn't drink and drive on land, don't do it on the water. Impaired judgment and slow reaction times can lead to disaster. The US Coast Guard knows this all too well: drowning is the top killer in boating accidents. Don't be a statistic. Always wear a life jacket, and stay sober while boating.

Let the Pros Take the Wheel

Boats handle differently than cars, and the waters are full of unseen hazards. Boating accidents caused by inexperienced drivers make up a large number of the accidents on the water each year. Resist the temptation to try driving if you haven't been trained. If you must drive, stick to calm waters and avoid crowded areas.

