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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Have a Memorable, Safe and Healthy Summer!**

With summer officially upon us, the Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD) encourages residents to get outside and enjoy the activities offered in the beautiful area we live in. While enjoying the longer days and great outdoors is vital for overall well-being, EHHD advises residents to protect their health while they go about our daily activities this summer.

Director of Health Rob Miller comments that "summer is a great time to enjoy the great outdoors and swim, bike, hike, travel, barbeque and participate in activities we've been waiting for all year. But with the opening of pools, parks, beaches and the unveiling of backyard grills it's important not to get too caught up in the fun and forget basic safety precautions that will prevent injuries and accidents. Get outside and stay active- but play it safe." Follow the simple precautions below that will allow you to enjoy summer while staying safe.

#### **Food Safety and Nutrition**

1. **Skip the greasy food on the road trips.** Car sickness is a type of motion sickness that occurs when the brain receives conflicting information from the ears, eyes and nerves, all of which help the body perceive motion. Avoiding greasy or heavy foods (such as fast food) before you hit the road or on the road can help reduce the undesirable symptoms of motion sickness.
2. **Keep drinking (and we don't mean alcohol!).** Fluids, fluids and more fluids are the secret weapon to making it through a hot day outdoors. Avoid sugary drinks and alcohol, which cause the body to lose fluids more rapidly leading to dehydration. Stick with unsweetened iced teas, seltzer and fruit-infused water, as your main summer beverages.
3. **Snack smart.** A healthy summertime diet should be based on an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables are full of antioxidants which protect your skin from sun-damage, slow the aging process, and are even shown to protect against cancer! Try kale as the base of your salad (massage it with olive oil to make it soft), or choose grilled veggies on the grill instead of the traditional side of potato salad. Find more delicious recipes on [www.ehhd.org/wellness](http://www.ehhd.org/wellness).
4. **Food Borne Illness Prevention.** The CDC estimates that foodborne illness sickens about 48 million people in the US each year, resulting in 128,000 hospitalizations and 3000 deaths. About 30 percent of the population- young children, the elderly and pregnant women- are especially susceptible to foodborne pathogens. Protect yourself and your friends and family in these ways:
  - Cook meat, poultry and seafood thoroughly. Get a food thermometer and cook beef, lamb, veal and pork to 160 degrees Fahrenheit and poultry such as chicken and turkey to 165 degrees Fahrenheit. Cook fish and other seafood until flesh is cooked thoroughly through and it appears "done." Visit [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov) for more details.
  - Don't cross-contaminate one food with another. Wash your hands, cutting boards and

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utensils after they've been in contact with raw meat, poultry or fish.

- Wash food thoroughly to remove visible dirt, and discard the outermost leaves of a head of lettuce or cabbage.
- Avoid the growth of bacteria in your food- refrigerate leftover foods promptly. Make sure hot food stays hot (above 140 degrees F) and cold food stays cold (below 40 degrees F).

### **Water Safety**

1. **Know what drowning actually looks like.** Drowning is the 5<sup>th</sup> leading cause of unintentional death in the U.S. From a distance someone who's drowning might look like they're treading water. If they are unresponsive to questions or their eyes look glassy or unfocused they might be drowning. Always stay within an arm's reach of a child who can't swim.
2. **Stay healthy at the pool.** Stay out of the water if you have diarrhea, shower before you get in the water, teach your kids not to pee or poop in the water and don't drink the water.

### **Beat the Heat and the Sun...And Have Some Fun!**

1. **Don't leave the kids or pets inside the car, even for a minute.** Each summer, about 36 kids across the country die from heat-related deaths from being left inside a hot car. The effect is amplified in a car, which acts like a greenhouse trapping sunlight and heat inside. Even on a mild 80 degree day, a child's body can reach as high as 106 degrees Fahrenheit in a half hour left inside a car. Children's bodies can lose their ability to cool themselves at these temperatures, leading to dehydration, heat stroke, seizures and even death. A simple way to prevent locking your child into a hot car is to remind yourself to take them out by putting something you need next to your child (i.e. your left shoe, wallet, briefcase, or cell phone.) You will go to grab your item and remember your child!
2. **Protect your skin.** Protecting your skin now can prevent you from getting cancer later. Apply SPF 15 or higher sunscreen every 2 hours, and avoid direct sun light. Visit [www.ehhd.org/sun](http://www.ehhd.org/sun) for more tips on sun safety, and the Environmental Working Group's Guide to Health Sunscreens to assess what sunscreen will be best for you and your family (<http://www.ewg.org/2015sunscreens/>).
3. **BLAST away your risk for tick-borne illness.** Bathe or shower soon after coming indoors, Look for ticks and remove with fine tipped tweezers, Apply repellants to skin and/or clothing, Sculpt your landscape to prevent tick habitat, and Treat your pets with a product recommended by your vet. Visit [www.ehhd.org/tickprevention](http://www.ehhd.org/tickprevention) for more information for tick borne disease prevention.
4. **Laugh a lot and have a fun, safe and healthy summer!** Laughter releases stress and promotes social well-being.

Follow the steps above to make this summer memorable for all the good times, not the "summer bummers" that bring trips to the emergency room. Visit [www.ehhd.org/healthandsafety](http://www.ehhd.org/healthandsafety) for a printable version of these health and safety tips. For monthly health, wellness and safety updates from EHHD please register at [www.ehhd.org/newsandupdates](http://www.ehhd.org/newsandupdates).

*Sources for this press release include [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov), [foodsafety.gov](http://foodsafety.gov), [webmd.com](http://webmd.com), and [cancer.org](http://cancer.org)*