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PRACTICE SAFETY WHEN ENJOYING THE WATER AND OTHER OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Reduce Risks For Injuries and Infections



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Pensacola, Fla. – Summer is in full swing, and the Florida Department of Health in Escambia County (FDOH-Escambia) wants residents and visitors to stay healthy and safe all summer long when enjoying the outdoors. Take precautions to limit exposure to injuries and illnesses commonly associated with outdoor and water activities.

- 1. Wear sunscreen.** Sunburns are not only miserable while they are healing, they increase the individual's risk for heat-related illnesses and skin cancers. Apply broad spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. Reapply sunscreen every two hours and after swimming or sweating.
- 2. Wear shoes.** Items buried in the sand or sandy water bottom can cause injuries and expose the injured person to infection. Wear beach or water shoes on the beach and when swimming by the shore.
- 3. Keep wounds away from water.** Many bacteria grow in warm, wet environments. As the summer sun warms our waters, the bacteria that naturally live in them multiply faster. People with open wounds, cuts or scratches can be exposed to bacterial infections through direct contact with seawater or brackish water such as that found in the many bayous in our area. Individuals with poor immune function are at increased risk of infection, even when they do not have visible wounds. Stay out of the water when you have open wounds. Immediately clean wounds acquired during beach or water activities and seek medical attention if wounds show signs of blistering, skin breakdown, or infection.
- 4. Cook seafood before eating it.** Bacteria that live in the water can also live in the marine life. Some bacteria, when consumed, can lead to gastrointestinal (GI) illnesses, severe blood infections or death. Individuals with poor immune function are at increased risk of severe complications from consuming raw seafood. Proper cooking will kill most bacteria that occur in seafood and other foods. Thoroughly cook oysters and other shellfish, such as by frying, stewing or roasting, to eliminate harmful bacteria and viruses in the meat.
- 5. Stay away from wild and stray animals.** Avoid contact with wild or stray animals and teach your children not to go near them. Do not feed wild or stray animals and never keep them as pets. Vaccinate your dog, cat, ferret, or horse to protect against rabies and do not allow your animals to roam freely or interact with wild or stray animals.

For more information, visit EscambiaHealth.com. Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyEscambia](https://twitter.com/HealthyEscambia).

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