



# NEWS

R E L E A S E

Illinois Department of Public Health

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## Health Tips for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Weekend

### *Sun protection, food safety and bug bites*

**SPRINGFIELD, Ill.** – Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Damon T. Arnold is offering some health tips for this year's 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend.

#### **SUN**

Wear sunscreen with at least sun protection factor (SPF) 15 or higher, and one that has both UVA and UVB protection. For the most effective protection, apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside. 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 a "red" sunburn hours later. All skin needs sun protection.

#### **FOOD SAFETY**

Picnics and cookouts top the list of summer activities. But remember, special precautions need to be taken when preparing and serving food during warm weather to avoid foodborne illnesses like salmonellosis.

The four basic food safety steps:

- **Clean:** Wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before and after handling food. Make sure surfaces that come into contact with food are clean before you start and are washed frequently.
- **Separate:** Raw meat and poultry should be prepared separately from produce and cooked food. Use separate cutting boards when chopping raw meat and produce, as juices from raw meat may contain harmful bacteria that can cross-contaminate ready-to-eat food.
- **Cook:** A food thermometer is the most important tool that will tell you if food is thoroughly cooked, as color is not a reliable indicator of doneness. The safe minimum internal temperature to kill any harmful bacteria in steaks, roasts, chops and fish is 145°F, while ground beef should reach 160°F. All poultry and fully cooked meats, like hot dogs, should be grilled to 165°F or until steaming hot.

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- **Chill:** Perishable food should never sit out for more than two hours. If the temperature is above 90°F, perishable food should not sit out more than one hour. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers promptly, and discard any food that has been out too long.

Keep hot food hot (140°F or above), and cold food cold (40°F or below).

The symptoms of most types of food poisoning include severe cramps, fever, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting and bloody diarrhea. Symptoms can begin from 30 minutes to three or more days after eating contaminated food. If symptoms are severe or last longer than two days, contact a doctor or health care provider.

### **MOSQUITO AND TICK PROTECTION**

The best way to avoid becoming ill with West Nile virus, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Lyme disease or other mosquito-borne or tick-borne illness is to avoid mosquito and tick bites.

- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn.
- Use insect repellent that includes DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535 according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- While in locations where ticks may be common, apply permethrin tick repellent, but only to clothing and only according to the directions on the label.
- Tuck long pants into your socks and boots. Wearing light-colored pants makes ticks easier to see. Wear a head covering or hat for added protection.
- In areas where there are ticks, check yourself, children and other family members every two to three hours for ticks.
- If you let your pets outdoors, check them often for ticks. Ticks can “hitch a ride” on your pets, but fall off in your home before they feed.
- Remove any tick promptly. Do not try to burn the tick with a match or cover it with petroleum jelly or nail polish. Do not use bare hands. The best way to remove a tick is to grasp it with fine-point 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 cloth or whatever can be used as a barrier between your fingers and the tick. Ticks can be safely disposed of by placing them in a container of soapy water or alcohol, sticking them to tape or flushing them down the toilet.
- Wash the bite area and your hands thoroughly with soap and water; apply an antiseptic to the bite site. If you experience a rash that looks like a bull's-eye, or a rash anywhere on the body or an unexplained illness accompanied by fever following a tick bite, consult your doctor.

Following these precautions will help you stay safe and healthy this holiday and throughout the summer.

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