



Fact Sheet

Don't Let An Infection Ruin Your Summer

The Wound Healing Center at Weiss Memorial Hospital offers summer safety tips

It seems that every television newscast and every newspaper article features a doctor saying that exercise and getting outdoors is good for you. The medical professionals at the Wound Healing Center at Weiss Memorial Hospital don't disagree but they caution that getting out and enjoying the summer can also be hazardous to your health.

"One of the things that makes summer so special is its brevity and you feel you need to take advantage of every beautiful day," said Dr. Shirley Roy, Director of the Center. "The flip side of that is we pursue activities we don't do all the time and forget to take the safety precautions to prevent injury. The risk of infection also increases as people travel to new places and interact with strangers and animals."

Dr. Roy suggests the following safety tips to reduce your chances of a trip to the doctor this summer:

- Buy sandals or flip flops that do not have a strip separating the toes, which can irritate the skin and lead to blisters and possibly foot ulcers. Diabetics should never wear sandals.
- Nail fungus and ringworm are commonly spread at nail salons. When planning a pedicure, make sure the salon is clean and the operators are licensed. In California, an unclean spa pedicure footbath infected more than 100 people but even individual footbaths should be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- Sharing gym and pool shower stalls increases the chances for becoming infected with ringworm of the foot or nail. Wear aqua shoes or other footwear that can be exposed to water when in common areas.
- You should never swim in water that might contain even very small amounts of sewage or animal waste that can infect open sores or be swallowed. Follow public health warnings posted at beaches and lakes.
- Even simple fireworks such as sparklers can reach temperatures of 1,000 degrees while barbeque grills and campfires also pose burn risks. Don't use ice on minor burns, instead relive pain and prevent contamination by submerging the burn in cool water. Apply sterile

dressings but do not apply ointment or home remedies such as butter or petroleum jelly that may seal in heat or cause infection.

- Mother does know best: wash your hands after being outside because dirty hands are a primary source of infection.
- For serious wounds inflicted when enjoying summer sports, doing home repairs or even mowing the lawn, seek professional medical attention immediately.
- Seek medical treatment if a burn or wound shows signs of infection including increased pain at the wound site, redness or swelling spreading away from the wound, a foul wound odor, change in color or amount of drainage from the wound or if you experience fever, chills, nausea or vomiting.

For more information on treating wounds and infections contact the Wound Healing Center located at Weiss Memorial Hospital or call (773) 564-6075.

The Wound Healing Center at Weiss Memorial Hospital specializes in the treatment of chronic wounds and non-responsive conditions and offers hospital-based outpatient wound care and hyperbaric oxygen therapy as well as disease management. Partnered with Weiss Memorial Hospital, the Wound Healing Center at Weiss is a National Healing Corporation Wound Center.