



Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive

NEWS RELEASE

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MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND SAFETY TIPS Health Department offers outdoor safety tips for holiday weekend and beyond

As you prepare for outdoor celebrations to mark Memorial Day weekend and the unofficial start of the summer season, Westchester County Health Commissioner Sherlita Amler, MD, and the Westchester County Department of Health have a dozen tips to help you celebrate safely this holiday weekend and throughout the season.

“Heat stroke and dehydration can take you by surprise,” Dr. Amler said. “The elderly, young children and those with high blood pressure, heart disease, or lung conditions must be especially careful to avoid heat-related illnesses. High humidity and some medications can also increase a person’s risk for heat stroke.”

Here are 11 more tips:

- **Drink water or uncaffeinated beverages every hour or two to avoid heat exhaustion and take breaks from the sun.** Signs of heat exhaustion include headache, nausea or vomiting, dizziness and exhaustion, as well as cool, moist, pale or flushed skin. Move out of the sun and apply cool, wet cloths to the skin.
- **Spray insect repellent containing DEET** on your clothes and exposed skin to avoid mosquito bites, and follow the directions on the label.
- **Empty out standing water** from all outdoor containers to keep mosquitoes from breeding; add a small amount of bleach to birdbaths.
- **Avoid attracting animals** by collecting and disposing of food and litter.
- **Perform tick checks** on people and pets after spending time outdoors. To remove ticks safely, follow the steps at www.westchestergov.com/health.

More

- **Barbecue safely** by thawing meat and poultry slowly in the refrigerator or under cold running water before cooking. Harmful bacteria usually grow in the "danger zone" between 40° and 140° F, so marinate and hold meat and poultry in the refrigerator until you are ready to grill it.
- **Transport food safely** by packing it into a cooler filled with ice to keep it at 40°F or below. Keep the cooler out of the direct sun and avoid opening the lid too often. Keep beverages in a separate cooler.
- **Cook your food to the right temperature**, which is 160 degrees for ground beef and pork, 165 degrees for chicken and hot dogs should be cooked to steaming hot. Always use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe internal temperature.
- **Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot.** Discard any food left out for more than two hours after cooking, or one hour if it more than 90°F outside.
- **Don't cross-contaminate.** Don't reuse marinades on cooked food unless you boil them first, and don't use the same plate, cutting board and utensils for vegetables or for cooked food that you used for raw meat.
- **Wash hands**, surfaces and utensils frequently with soap and water or antiseptic wipes.

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