

# ACCESS TO HEALTH UPDATE



Right for your beneficiaries. Right for you.

## Childhood obesity

Overweight in children and adolescents is a serious health issue, and data shows that the prevalence of overweight is increasing (see graph.) The most recent data (2004) showed that for children aged 6-19, the prevalence of overweight was over 17% – more than three times the target prevalence of 5% set in *Healthy People 2010*.

*Healthy People 2010*, a report citing a set of health objectives for the nation to achieve, identified overweight and obesity as a leading health indicator. Studies link overweight children and type 2 diabetes and show that 60 percent of overweight children already have one risk factor for heart disease.

Primary care providers are on the front line in addressing the issue.

An expert committee, convened last year by the American Medical Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, offer these recommendations for when PCPs and pediatricians see children:

1. Assess children for obesity risk – identify elevated BMI, medical risk, unhealthy eating and physical activity habits.
2. Annually calculate and plot BMI.
3. Provide obesity prevention messages and suggest weight control interventions.

### V codes help track weight changes

With the help of network providers, health plans are able to monitor and track our membership for the prevalence of childhood obesity.

When you assess a child and determine his/her BMI, please document it in the medical record and use the appropriate V code on the claim you submit.

- V85.54 – Body mass index, pediatric, greater than or equal to 95th percentile for age (obese.)
- V85.53 – Body mass index, pediatric, 85th percentile to less than 95th percentile for age (overweight.)
- V85.52 – Body mass index, pediatric, 5th percentile to 85th percentile for age (normal weight.)
- V85.51 – Body mass index, pediatric, less than 5th percentile for age (underweight.)

**“Primary care providers are on the front line in addressing the [obesity] issue.”**

Prevalence of Overweight Among U.S. Children and Adolescents (Aged 2–19 Years)				
	1971–1974	1976–1980	1988–1994	2003–2004
<b>Ages 2–5</b>	5%	5%	7.2%	13.9%
<b>Ages 6–11</b>	4%	6.5%	11.3%	18.8%
<b>Ages 12–19</b>	6.1%	5%	10.5%	17.4%



Source: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)

## ADHD and the Healthcare Provider

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common reasons a child may present to a healthcare provider for other than an acute medical condition. When the child presents with inattention, hyperactivity, impulsivity, academic underachievement or behavior problems, it is important to consider ADHD after other medical conditions have been ruled out. This requires the clinician to be aware of the characteristics of ADHD and the evidenced based treatment of ADHD.

One resource for the healthcare provider is the website of the “National Initiative for Children’s Healthcare Quality” which can be found at: <http://www.nichq.org/NICHQ/Topics/ChronicConditions/ADHD/Tools/ADHD.htm>. This website offers a toolkit that can assist the clinician in diagnosing and treating their patients. It is most important to remember that behavioral interventions as well as medication are helpful, but medication alone is not the best practice. When prescribing medications, it is important to find one agent at a sufficient dose that is effective and only prescribe multiple medications after careful evaluation of less than satisfactory treatment responses.

### It's springtime, and for most people, that means it's time to go outside and enjoy the weather. (Share with your patients)

The return of warmer temperatures brings thoughts of freedom, relaxation, exploration, and being closer to nature. Whether you're relaxing in the backyard, turning up your garden, hitting the pool, or exploring the great outdoors, here are some ways to help keep you and your family healthy this spring and summer.



#### Beware of Bugs

Warmer temperatures aren't just attractive to people. Mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, and other insects thrive in warmer weather, and they can transmit West Nile virus, Lyme disease, and other illnesses. Using insect repellent that works well, and applying it properly, allows you to continue to play and work outdoors with a reduced risk of mosquito and tick bites.

Young ticks are so small that they can be difficult to see, but both young and adult ticks hungrily look to animals and sometimes people to bite. To protect yourself from tick bites, avoid tick-infested areas (especially places with leaf-litter and high grasses), wear light-colored clothing so you can see

ticks crawling on you, and use repellent containing DEET. You can also treat clothing with permethrin, which protects through several washings. Always follow the directions on repellent packaging! After you have been outside, check your body, your clothing, your children, and your pets for ticks. Visit [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/Prevention/ld\\_Prevention\\_Avoid.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/Prevention/ld_Prevention_Avoid.htm) how to check for ticks, remove them from your clothes, and how to remove them from skin safely once they've bitten... getting the whole tick, not just the body! Consult your healthcare provider if you become ill in the 1-3 weeks following a bite. It could be any number of illnesses. Pesticides, vegetation-free play areas, and landscaping techniques for tick-free zones can also help limit your exposure to ticks and other insects.

#### Healthy Pets, Healthy People

While you're outside enjoying the weather, remember to protect your pets too. Keeping your pets healthy helps to keep you and your family healthy. Children can get roundworm and hookworm from soil contaminated by pet feces (stool), so make sure that puppies and kittens are seen by a veterinarian and dewormed. Protect family pets from ticks and fleas by keeping them on a flea and tick control program.

Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

# The Formula for Success

## Child Health Check-Up



The Child Health Check-Up program is a preventive and comprehensive service for eligible children birth through 20 years of age. The Child Health Check-Up program provides for regular health check-ups that include a comprehensive health and developmental history (including assessment of behavioral health status); a comprehensive physical exam; nutritional and developmental assessment; vision, hearing and dental screenings; lab tests (including testing for lead poisoning); appropriate immunizations (shots); health education/anticipatory guidance; diagnosis and treatment; and referral and follow-up, as needed.

A referral to a dentist begins at 3 years or earlier as medically necessary, with subsequent examinations by a dentist every 6 months, or more frequently as prescribed by a dentist or other authorized provider. Eligible children and young adults should have a health check-up at birth; 2-4 days for newborns discharged in less than 48 hours after delivery; by 1 month; 2 months; 4 months; 6 months; 9 months; 12 months; 15 months; 18 months; and once every year for ages 2-20. Individuals may also request a Child Health Check-Up at other times if they think their child needs it.

Good health starts with regular check-ups! Regular check-ups help to identify health problems before they become serious.

### Please also note:

- CHCUP providers may only bill for one visit, per Medicaid child, per provider, per day. The visit may be a CHCUP visit or a sick visit. Provider discretion in evaluating the degree of illness should determine if a Child Health Check-Up should be performed. This is explained in the Medicaid CHCUP Coverage and Limitations Handbook, October 2003, page 2-3. Medicaid may recoup overpayments if medical record audits indicate that a provider has been reimbursed for a CHCUP and a sick visit on the same day, for the same child.
- A CHCUP referral code is required on the claim form in order to be reimbursed for a CHCUP.
- It is critical that the federally required Referral Code be appropriate for the Diagnosis Code on Child Health Check-Ups. For example, a diagnosis code of V20.2 (routine infant or child health check) would be appropriate with a referral code "U" or "NU" (complete normal/ no referral). A diagnosis code of V20.2 (routine infant or child health check) is not appropriate with a referral code of "T" or "ST" (abnormal, patient referred). For the required referral codes see page 3-4 of the Child Health Check-Up Coverage and Limitations Handbook.
- CHCUP providers are responsible for referrals and follow-up on a Medicaid child as a result of a CHCUP. This is referenced in the Medicaid CHCUP Coverage and Limitations Handbook, October 2003, page 2-2.
- Dental referrals are required beginning at 3 years of age; earlier as medically indicated. CHCUP providers must refer Medicaid children who are 3 years old and older for an assessment by a dentist and document this referral in the child's medical record. The provider may refer a younger child if it is medically necessary. Following the initial dental referral, subsequent visits to a dentist are recommended every 6 months, or more frequently as prescribed by a dentist or other authorized provider.

# ACCESS TO HEA

## Advance Directives

Advance directives are instructions given by persons to direct their health care in the event that they lose the ability to make and communicate medical decisions for themselves.

The purpose of an advance directive is to define the medical care desired and to specify whom to ask for decisions in the future, in order to make medical decisions that are consistent with the wishes and values of the person who has become incapacitated.

**Formal written** advance directives may take the form of a living will, a durable power of attorney for healthcare (DPOAHC), or some combination of the two.

The terminology, statutes, and documents relating to advance directives vary from state to state.

Nevertheless, an advance directive created in one state is valid in all other states and advance directives are thus portable from state to state.

By law, health care facilities may not base admission on whether a person has or does not have an advance directive. (482 CRF section 489.102(a)(3)) In any health care facility, a copy of written advance directives should be placed in the patient's chart so that all caregivers are aware of its existence and contents.

**A living will** is a document in which a person specifies preferences for care or treatment in the event of future incapacity. A separate document designating a surrogate is called a durable power of attorney for health care (DPOAHC). Some states may require that a DPOAHC be separate from the living will; others may combine the provisions of a living will and a DPOAHC. A person completing a living will or DPOAHC may rescind or change it at any time, provided he or she still possesses the capacity to make decisions. Neither a living will nor a DPOAHC becomes active unless the person becomes incapacitated. In some states, an individual may choose to activate a surrogate while he or she still has decision-making capacity.

Living wills may vary considerably in their degree of detail. They may simply specify general goals, comfort over aggressive treatment, for example, or discontinuation of treatment that appears to be futile. They may also specify types of care or treatment, such as attempted cardiopulmonary resuscitation, intubation, intravenous hydration or medication, hospitalization in the event of a serious illness, antibiotic therapy, or the use of feeding tubes.

A person completing an advance directive cannot foresee or address all the situations in which choices about treatment may be required. Choosing someone to make decisions on one's behalf provides additional flexibility in dealing with unforeseen circumstances.

[http://www.amda.com/governance/whitepapers/surrogate/advance\\_directives.cfm](http://www.amda.com/governance/whitepapers/surrogate/advance_directives.cfm)

## The Task Force Finds Several Methods Equally Effective For Colorectal Cancer Screening

The Task Force now recommends that adults age 50 to 75 be screened for colorectal cancer using annual high-sensitivity fecal occult blood testing, sigmoidoscopy every five years with fecal occult testing between sigmoidoscopic exams, or colonoscopy every 10 years.

According to the Task Force, good evidence exists that using these methods saves lives. The Task Force recommended against routine colorectal cancer screening in adults between the ages of 76 and 85 because the benefits of regular screening were small compared with the risks. The Task Force also recommended that adults over the age of 85 not be screened at all because the harm of screening may be significant, and other conditions may be more likely to affect their health or well-being.

The recommendations and accompanying summary of evidence were posted in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* online at [www.annals.org](http://www.annals.org).

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) [updates@subscriptions.ahrq.gov]

## It's Springtime

### Dining Al Fresco

Nothing says summer like the smoky flavor of foods cooked out on the grill. When you're grilling, use a meat thermometer to ensure that you cook meat and poultry thoroughly. Ground beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F. Also, put cooked meat on a clean platter, rather than back on the one that held the raw meat, to avoid cross-contamination. Whether you're cooking out in the backyard or on a picnic, always keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot. When you're finished eating, refrigerate leftovers promptly. For downloadable tips, see Safe Food Handling: Seven Super Steps to Safe Food In the Summer on our partner site, FightBAC.org. Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

## Please share with your patients

### Starting Prenatal Care as Early as possible

Prenatal care is the health care you get while you are pregnant. Take care of yourself and your baby by:

- Getting **early** prenatal care. If you know you're pregnant, or think you might be, call your doctor to schedule a visit.
- Getting **regular** prenatal care. Your doctor will schedule you for many appointments over the course of your pregnancy. Don't miss any -- they are all important.
- Following your doctor's advice.

#### Why do I need prenatal care?

Prenatal care can help keep you and your baby healthy. Babies of mothers who do not get prenatal care are three times more likely to have a low birth weight and five times more likely to die than those born to mothers who do get care. Doctors can spot health problems early when they see mothers regularly. This allows doctors to treat them early. Early treatment can cure many problems and prevent others. Regular health care is best for you and your baby.

#### I am thinking about getting pregnant. How can I take care of myself?

You should start taking care of yourself *before* you start trying to get pregnant. By staying active, eating right, and taking a multivitamin, you can help keep yourself and your baby healthy even before it is conceived. This will help you have a healthy pregnancy and lower your chances of having a baby born with a birth defect.

Here are some ways to take care of yourself before you get pregnant:

- Eat healthy foods, exercise regularly (30 minutes per day most days of the week is best), and get enough rest and sleep. Talk to your doctor about what kinds of food and exercise are best for you.
- Get 400 micrograms (mcg) of *folic acid* (one of the B vitamins) every day. The best way to do this is to take a daily multivitamin with this amount of folic acid. Getting enough folic acid every day before you get pregnant and during early pregnancy can help prevent certain birth defects. Many breakfast cereals and other grain products are enriched with folic acid. But only some products contain 400 mcg of folic acid per serving. Always check the labels to be sure you're getting your daily dose.
- See your doctor for a complete check up. Make sure that you've had all your shots, especially for *rubella* (German measles). Rubella can cause serious birth defects. Chickenpox can also be dangerous during pregnancy. If you've had chickenpox and rubella in the past, you should be immune to them. If not, talk to your doctor about the vaccines.
- Tell your doctor about any prescription or over-the-counter medicines (including herbal remedies) you are taking. *Some medicines are not safe to take during pregnancy.*
- Stop smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, or taking drugs.** Ask your doctor for help. Members of your faith community, counselors, or friends can also give support.

#### I'm pregnant. What should I do or avoid for a healthy baby?

Some things you can do to take care of yourself and the precious life growing inside you include:

- Take a multivitamin or prenatal vitamin with 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day.
- Get early and regular prenatal care. Whether this is your first pregnancy or third, health care is extremely important. Your doctor will check to make sure you and the baby are healthy at each visit. If there are any problems, early action will help you and the baby.
- Eat a healthy diet that includes fruits, vegetables, grains, and calcium - rich foods. Choose foods low in saturated fat.
- Unless your doctor tells you not to, try to be active for 30 minutes, most days of the week. If you don't have much time, get your exercise in 10 minute segments, three times a day.
- If you smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs, **STOP!** These can cause

long-term harm to your baby. Ask your doctor for help.

- Ask your doctor before taking any medicine. Some are not safe during pregnancy. Remember that even over-the-counter medicines and herbal products may cause side effects or other problems. So ask your doctor before taking these products too.
  - Avoid hot tubs, saunas, and x-rays.
  - If you have a cat, ask your doctor about *toxoplasmosis*. This infection is caused by a parasite sometimes found in cat feces. When left untreated toxoplasmosis can cause birth defects. Your doctor may suggest avoiding cat litter and working in garden areas used by cats.
  - Don't eat uncooked or undercooked meats or fish.
  - Stay away from chemicals like insecticides, solvents (like some cleaners or paint thinners), lead, and mercury. Not all products have pregnancy warnings on their labels. If you're unsure if a product is safe, ask your doctor before using it.
  - Avoid or control caffeine in your diet. Pregnant women should have no more than two servings of caffeine per day. Remember that teas, sodas, and chocolate may contain caffeine.
  - Stay active. Most women continue working through pregnancy. Few jobs are unsafe for pregnant women. But if you're worried about the safety of your job, talk with your doctor.
  - Get informed. Read books, watch videos, go to a childbirth class, and talk with experienced moms.
- Ask your doctor about childbirth education classes for you and your partner. Classes can help you prepare for the birth of your baby.

#### How often should I see my doctor during pregnancy?

Your doctor will give you a schedule of all the doctor's visits you should have while pregnant. As your pregnancy progresses, you'll see the doctor more often. Most experts suggest you see your doctor:

- about once each month for the first six months of pregnancy
  - every two weeks for the seventh and eighth month of pregnancy
  - every week until the baby is born
- If you are over 35 or your pregnancy is high risk because of health problems (like diabetes or high blood pressure), you'll probably see your doctor more often.

#### What happens during prenatal visits?

During the first prenatal visit, you can expect your doctor or nurse to do the following:

- ask about your health history including diseases, operations, or prior pregnancies
- ask about your family's health history
- do a complete physical exam
- do a pelvic exam with a Pap test
- order tests of your blood and urine
- check your blood pressure, urine, height, and weight
- figure out your expected due date
- answer your questions

At the first visit, you should ask questions and discuss any issues related to your pregnancy. Find out all you can about how to stay healthy.

Later prenatal visits will probably be shorter. Your doctor will check on your health and make sure the baby is growing as expected. Most prenatal visits will include:

- checking the baby's heart rate
- checking your blood pressure
- checking your urine for signs of diabetes
- measuring your weight gain

While you're pregnant your doctor or midwife may suggest a number of laboratory tests, ultrasound exams, and other screening tests.

Source: US Department of Health & Human Services <http://www.4woman.gov/faq/prenatal.htm>

### It's Springtime

#### Around the Yard

Now's the time to seal up, trap up, and clean up to prevent rodent infestation. As you're clearing out clutter, fill any gaps or holes inside and outside your home. Eliminate or seal rodent food sources such as pet food, bird feeders, and garbage cans. Elevate hay, woodpiles, and garbage cans at least 1 foot off the ground, and trim grass and shrubbery within 100 feet of your home. In the yard, remove any items that may collect standing water, such as buckets, old tires, and toys.

Mosquitoes can breed in them in just days. You can reduce the number of ticks around your home by removing leaf litter and brush- and woodpiles around your house and at the edge of your yard. By clearing trees and brush in your yard, you can reduce the likelihood that deer, rodents, and ticks will live there. Replace or repair torn window screens to keep bugs out of the house.

Gardening is a great outdoor activity for people of all ages. Stay safe and healthy as

you grab your tools and head outside. Wear gloves, use safety gear when handling equipment and chemicals, protect yourself from the sun, and use insect repellent.

Also watch out for heat stress and know your limitations. *Toxoplasma* is a parasite that people can get from contaminated cat feces (stool). To a cat, a sandbox can look like a litter box, so keep it covered to protect your children from toxoplasmosis.

Outdoor pollens and air pollutants can be triggers for allergic reactions and asthma. Some experiences include nasal and sinus allergies and hives. Asthma can cause recurrent symptoms such as wheezing, chest tightness, shortness of breath and coughing. Stay healthy by properly taking any prescription or over-the-counter allergy medicine and having and following an asthma action plan. Wearing a protective nose and mouth mask, or even sunglasses or protective eyewear, while doing yard work could help to avoid the triggers that cause allergy and asthma complications.

Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

## Please share with your patients

### What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior directed at a former or current partner, spouse, or boyfriend or girlfriend. The abuser uses fear and intimidation to gain power and control over the other person. The abuse can take many forms, including physical battering, emotional abuse, economic abuse, and sexual abuse, and may involve using children, pets, threats, intimidation, and isolation.

Domestic violence affects all types of people, regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, and religion. It is also called intimate partner abuse, intimate partner violence, family violence, battering, elder abuse, and teen relationship abuse.

Domestic violence is a national problem that touches many lives. It is estimated that 25% of women and 8% of men in the United States have been physically and/or sexually abused by an intimate partner at some point in their adult lives.

Domestic violence can have tragic conclusions.

In those homicides where the killer is identified, about 33% of female murder victims and 4% of male murder victims were killed by their intimate partners. Abuse in dating relationships is common among teens. Relationship abuse in teens often takes the form of extreme possessiveness and jealousy.

Many teens do not have the experience or maturity to recognize that they are being abused. If you think you might be in an abusive relationship, talk to your parents, another adult family member, or a school counselor or teacher. You can also call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233).

### What are the signs of domestic violence and what makes it more likely to occur?

Domestic violence can begin during dating with subtle jealousy or possessiveness. After the relationship becomes more serious, the abuser may begin making threats, name-calling, and slamming doors or breaking dishes. Abusers often use emotional or financial abuse to try to make the victim feel worthless or helpless. Typically after battering starts, it continues and is likely to become worse. For example, battering that starts with a slap may escalate over time to kicking and shoving and finally choking. The abuser might exert control over the victim by threatening violence against his or her children or pets.

Although domestic violence can affect men, a large majority (85%) of its victims are women. Poverty and alcohol abuse increase the likelihood that it will occur. People who witnessed domestic violence when they were children are at a higher risk for being in a violent relationship as adults, either as the victim or abuser.

### What are the harmful effects of domestic violence?

Victims not only suffer serious physical injuries from domestic assaults, but they also commonly have chronic health problems from the repeated injuries and stress of living in a violent relationship. Some of these health problems include post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic neck or back pain, depression, migraine headaches, and arthritis. Additionally, women who are sexually abused by their partners have an increased risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), unwanted pregnancy, and other problems. Women who experience domestic violence are more likely to smoke or abuse alcohol.

Violence can increase in frequency and intensity during pregnancy.

Not surprisingly, problems during pregnancy such as low weight gain, anemia, infections, and bleeding are more common for women who are abused.

Abuse during this time has also been shown to increase the baby's risk of low birth weight, premature birth, and death.

Domestic violence affects not only those abused but also children who witness abuse. Children who grow up around violence are at greater risk for depression, poor school performance, aggressive behavior, withdrawal, and complaints like stomachaches and headaches. Teens are at increased risk for depression, drug and alcohol use, and disruptive behavior; and affected teen

girls attempt suicide more often.

Exposure to violence in the home teaches children that violence is a normal way of life and increases their risk of being part of a violent relationship as adults, either as abusers or as victims.

### Why do victims stay?

People who are not abused might find it difficult to understand why anyone would stay in a violent relationship. Victims are often blamed and labeled as weak and needy. Some people believe that if a person stays in an abusive relationship, she or he must somehow like it or need to be beaten to feel worthy.

But the issue is more complex than simply leaving or staying.

A woman may fear that the abuser will hurt her and her children or take her children away. She may have limited financial options. She may blame herself. She may stay because she does not want to break up the family or for religious reasons.

Also, she may still love her abuser and hope that things will get better.

A man who is being abused may have a similar experience.

If you know someone who is being abused, be a good listener and supportive friend. Remind her that she and her children are worth better treatment.

You may be able to help a victim understand his or her options. You can also suggest that the person contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE [7233] to find a local domestic violence group.

Understand if the person is reluctant to leave. The person often knows his or her abuser best and what options are safest.

### What should I do?

If you are a victim, take steps to decrease your risk of injury, such as memorizing phone numbers you can call in an emergency, and teaching your children not to get in the middle of a fight.

When preparing to leave, develop a safety plan. Your plan might include putting together and hiding a suitcase of clothing, money or charge cards, and important papers, including Social Security cards and birth certificates for you and your children. You might try to open a savings account or obtain a credit card if it is possible to do so secretly.

After you have left, you may have to take extra measures to stay safe.

You may want to obtain a protective order (also called a restraining order), which requires the abuser to stay away from you and not contact you.

It is unusual, but possible that the court may be able to order the batterer to pay your legal costs and fees. As a victim of a crime, you may also be eligible for additional financial support from the state in which you live.

Your local advocacy group can help you get in touch with legal and social services in your area.

### Where can I get help?

Contact a local domestic violence group for information and support. To find the program offering shelter and legal support nearest to you, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE [7233] or see the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence's Web site at <http://www.ncadv.org>.

Many people fear that their partner will retaliate if they contact the police.

If this is the case, an advocate at your local domestic violence program may be able to help you decide about this option. Your advocate can also help you find safe shelter or obtain a protective order if you choose to do so.

Many states allow you to obtain a protective order without an attorney.

In some states, the court can also award temporary custody of your children to you, along with child support, spousal support, use of the home and car, and other awards along with the protective order.

While protective orders do not automatically prevent you from being abused, they do deter abusers. In one large study, women who obtained permanent court orders were 80% less likely to be physically or psychologically abused than those who did not receive protective orders.

Source: <http://www.webmd.com/mental-health/tc/domestic-violence-topic-overview>

## It's Springtime

### Fun in the Sun

Protect yourself and your family from recreational water illnesses by doing your part to keep germs out of the pool. Do not swim when you have diarrhea, don't swallow pool water, take a shower before swimming, and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Keeping germs out of the pool means a safer swim for everyone.

Play it safe in the sun. Avoid midday when the sun is intense, use sunscreen with at least SPF 15, cover up with clothing, wear a brimmed hat, and wear sunglasses that block UVA and UVB rays. Be aware of the signs of heat stress.

### In the Great Outdoors

When you're out on the trail, whether hiking, camping, or hunting, protect yourself from mosquitoes and other bugs by using insect repellent. Wear long sleeves, long pants, and long socks when practical. Always check your clothes and body for ticks. If you find any ticks, carefully remove them with tweezers. The ticks that transmit Lyme disease are most active in May, June, and July, so be especially careful during

those months. However, you need to look for ticks in all months of the year to protect yourself against other tickborne diseases.

Just because a mountain stream looks clear, it doesn't mean it's safe to drink. *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium* are two parasites that you can't see, but they can make you very sick. Always treat or filter water to make it safe to drink.

Bats are fun to watch as they flutter around at dusk. In many camp situations, the mere presence or sighting of bats is common and normal. Sometimes, bats may be infected with rabies and may pose a risk for exposure to humans. Remind children to never touch a bat. If you are bitten by a bat, wash the affected area thoroughly and get medical advice immediately. Whenever possible, the bat should be captured and sent to a laboratory for rabies testing.

**During Memorial Day and Independence Day**, remember the safety tips on firework use. Enjoy the great outdoors. Have a safe and healthy spring and summer!

Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)