## For A Safer Summer

By Ulysses W. Watkins, M.D.

"In the good old summer time" is the time of year when the grass is greener, the weather is nicer, the parks are more filled, the vacation time is better, and school is out, this is of course fortunate for the kids and sometimes unfortunate for the parents.

However, along with the joys of summer there are also quite a number of potential hazards in existence that you should know about. It could mean a safer and misery-free season.

1. Sunburn - Don't let that old saying "Black people don't get sunburn or suntan" steer you wrong. No matter what shade you are, you can fall victim to the problem. So when working or playing, take the necessary precautions against sunburn. Skin cancer has also been associated with radiation from the sun, yes, even in some black people.

2. Drowning - Take lessons. If you want to learn to swim but don't try to learn on the "sink or swim" games that your friends might play with you, you might

learn the hard way. This could cause you to drown.

3. Snake bites - There are poisonous snake types in the U.S.A.; Coral, Rattlers, Water Moccasins and Copper Heads. Rattlesnakes cause about 60% of all snake bites and Coral Snakes (the most poisonous) cause less than 2 %. Remember, if bitten by a snake, poison or not, never run, open up the bite sight with a small incision so that the poison may run out and seek help as soon as possible.

Fix a tourniquet between the bite site and the heart so as not to let the blood drain back toward the heart, loosening it periodically to allow some blood supply to that part of the body.

4. Poison Oak or Ivy - Learn to recognize it so you can stay away from it. However, if you get into it, calamine or caladryl lotion offers temporary relief until you can check with your doctor.

5. Household poisons - While doing the summer cleaning be careful that these cleaning products are safely put away into a

locked closet so that babies or small children cannot get to them.

6. Fires - Carefully put out all fires after barbecuing or camping.

7. Stings - If stung by a bee, wasp or yellow jacket, follow the same steps primarily as you would with a snake bite.

8. Lawnmower Accidents - Be careful of your feet or hands being in the area of a blade. If of course, you have this kind of accident, first stop the bleeding with some type tourniquet and get to a doctor or emergency room.

9. Summer colds and Sinusites - If you have the symptoms of cold or allergies but the home remedies do not work, which is what 85 % of Americans try first, then by all means check with your

10. Auto accidents - More cars are on the highways and roads during the summer, so all I can say is be careful, because you know what careless and drunken driving will do. Also always drive defensively.



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11. Involvement in arguments and fights — There is nothing in a drug store that will kill or hurt you faster than an irate or angry person at a park or night club who is probably also high and has a knife or gun.

Parks are full of people who have never met each other before and could care less about one another regardless what color they

The best advice here is to mind your own business and try to stay clear of arguments. They can kill

These are only a few of the summer health hazards. If you can think of others, then take steps to prevent them. It could mean the difference between a happy and haz ardous summer.

## Danger Signals

It is important to become familiar with some common danger signals of disease. Continuing the list: these are some of the signals to watch for.

WEIGHT CHANGE - Sudden or extreme change in your body weight, whether you gain or lose, always needs an adequate explanation. Sometimes you will first notice a weight change because your clothes no longer fit.

HEADACHE - There are hundreds of causes for headaches such as colds, hypertension, sinusitis, tooth problems, scalp problems, a need for glasses or glasses to be changed and many more. Do not neglect it or mask it with drugs, especially if it recurs.

FEVER is practically always a sign of infection. Take your own temperature with a thermometer if you are in doubt and try to establish what your "normal"

temperature tends to be. There are some individual variations but anything one degree or more above normal (98.6 degrees Fahrenheit by mouth in adults) suggests prompt medical at-

In infants and small children, fever of 100 to 120 degrees rectally (normal being 99.6 degrees Fahrenheit) is common with colds but uncommon in larger children and aduks. Learn to correctly take temperatures at home, it could save someone's life.

BLEEDING - from skin, nose, or any other body opening except for a woman's monthly periods. In a woman who has stopped having periods (menopause) any type of bleeding vaginally is considered

serious until proven otherwise. Also any bleeding from the penis in any boy or man regardless of age is considered serious.

INDIGESTION - This is serious especially if it keeps on occuring in spite of the patent medicines that you will take thinking that, it is just something you ate. Gastritis also has been known to make a person believe that he or she has heart trouble, kidney infection, vaginal infection, back strain and other

However, quite the opposite is true where you might have any of these problems and just write it off as having "gas." So please see a doctor if gastritis keeps coming

INSOMNIA (sleeplessness) -Don't take sleeping pills until the cause has been investigated by your doctor.

SKIN CHANGES - Every skin rash, unhealed sore, or unex-

plained change in the color of the skin or complexion, whether it's pale face, ruddy face, yellow face (usually yellow jaundice), demands investigation. Warts and moles should be watched to see that they are not enlarging or changing color.

PERSONALITY CHANGES -If a lion begins to act like a lamb, or vice versa, something is wrong. Abnormal restlessness, aggressiveness, or shyness all represent personality changes that bear watching.

VISION CHANGES - If you begin to see double, see poorly, or see rainbows around lights or squint, check the cause.

LUMPS (or growths) - usually painless, on or under the skin in any part of the body, especially if they increase in size should be checked out. Also check on the ones that do produce pain.



is what's in the bottle, not what's on it.

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