

SUMMER

It's that time of year! Summer brings people outside for fun activities, which in general, contribute to a healthy lifestyle and strengthen the bonds between friends and family.

However, doctors see increases in many ailments and injuries during warmer months. High temperatures can be dangerous, and sunburn should be avoided at all costs. People should also know how to identify poisonous plants and what to do if an insect bites.

Keep reading to learn how to take steps to stay

healthy, from avoiding food poisoning to preventing skin cancer. Inside, you'll find a variety of helpful articles about summer ailments ...

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✓ Food poisoning threatens family picnics

Hot summer temperatures increase the risk of food poisoning, and while rare, picnicking can lead to a trip to the doctor's office.

"Bacteria can double in 20 minutes when the food temperature is in the danger zone — between 40 degrees and 140 degrees," said Dr. Kim Howerton, a board-certified family physician.

"Keep hot food hot and cold food cold," she said. "Remember the two-hour rule: perishable food should never be left in the danger zone for more than two hours. If it's been more

than two hours, or just one hour during the hot summer temperatures, throw it away."

Cooked food can be stored in chafing dishes, preheated steam tables, warming trays or slow cookers to maintain its temperature. Cold food should be stored in a container on ice to keep it below 40 degrees.

"If you are traveling with cold food, bring a



Dr. Kim Howerton

cooler with a cold source," Dr. Howerton said. "It is difficult to keep food hot without a heat source when traveling, so it's best to cook food before leaving home, refrigerate it, and then transport it cold."

"And keep everything clean," Dr. Howerton said. "It's a fact that bacteria from raw meat and poultry products can easily spread to other foods by hands, utensils or juices dripping from packages. When transporting raw meat or poultry, double-wrap or place the packages in plastic bags to prevent juices from the raw product

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✓ Eye injuries increase with summer activities

Fireworks are a common cause of children's eye injuries, especially in the summer. "No ophthalmologist likes to be on call for the Fourth of July," said Dr. Hilary Grissom, an ophthalmologist at the Eye Clinic in Jackson. "Every year, we see children with injuries caused by fireworks."

The best way to be safe around fireworks is to avoid backyard fireworks and only attend public displays, she said. Fireworks can cause severe burns and other damage to the eye.

"Every year, we see people in the emergency room with severe eye lacerations and burns that require surgery," she said. "One-third to one-fourth of fireworks' injuries to the eye result in permanent vision loss."

And children have a higher risk to injuries from fireworks, she said. Little children holding sparklers, teenage boys shooting fireworks at one another, and people getting too close to bottle rockets and Roman candles create hazards.

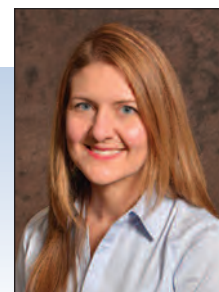
"Things can happen so quickly," Dr. Grissom said. "You can't stop it."

Besides fireworks, summertime is a particularly dangerous time for eyes because people are outside more, playing sports, sitting in the sun and generally doing more activities that can cause vision problems and eye injuries, she said.

Nearly half of all eye injuries occur in and around the home from debris flying out of lawnmowers, grease popping off stovetops and a variety of home improvement projects. Dr.



Dr. Grissom practices at the Eye Clinic with Drs. Arthur Woods, Mark Bateman, Sean Neel, and Jason Sullivan. The clinic is at 668 Skyline Drive. For an appointment, call 731-424-2414.



Grissom recommends that people wear safety glasses when doing these types of activities.

"Every year we see children with eye injuries caused by fireworks."

Exposure to ultraviolet light is harmful to eyes as well. Dr. Grissom recommends wearing brimmed hats and sunglasses with 99 percent and above UV protection.

Sun damage speeds the onset of cataracts, can worsen age-related macular degeneration and can cause growths on the eye, Dr. Grissom said. People who live in sunny parts of the world or who work in the sun seem to have a greater risk for a condition called pterygium. Sun-damaged skin from the white part of the eye grows over the cornea, causing astigmatism and obstructing vision.

Photosensitive drugs that make your skin more sensitive to light can make your eyes more sensitive, too.

Thousands of sports and recreation-related injuries also occur to the eye each year. The risk of injury varies with the activity, but sports-related eye injuries occur more often with baseball, softball, basketball and racquet sports.

Wear protective eyewear with polycarbonate lenses when playing these sports, Dr. Grissom said, and even consider not playing high-risk sports if you already have reduced vision in one eye.



✓ Avoid common foot injuries

When transitioning from winter footwear to sandals and flip-flops as temperatures warm, many people can develop problems with their feet.

Winter shoes are typically more supportive than warmer-weather shoes, and people tend to be more active outdoors when the weather is nice. As a result, common warm-weather injuries include tendonitis, stress fractures and plantar fasciitis, said Dr. Nicolas Arcuri, a podiatric surgeon.

Tendonitis is an inflammation or irritation of a tendon that can develop through overuse — especially when wearing the wrong footwear. “Your tendons have to fire or work harder with a sandal on than with a lace-up shoe or boot,” Dr. Arcuri said.

Stress fractures are tiny cracks in the bone and are most common in the feet and lower legs. They are typically caused by a repetitive movement, such as jumping or running, and people

with conditions such as osteoporosis are particularly susceptible.

Plantar fasciitis is inflamed tissue in the heel, and people who are runners, overweight or wear improper footwear

are more susceptible. It’s often a chronic condition that causes pain after rest or inactivity.

“Plantar fasciitis is a sharp pain in the heel or arch that is usually worse in the morning with your first steps or at the end of the day,” Dr. Arcuri said.

Like tendonitis, stress fractures and plantar fasciitis are commonly caused by overuse. Dr. Arcuri said it’s beneficial to wear proper footwear, especially if you’re going to be walking long distances.

“Don’t transition to sandals too fast,” he said. “A shoe with support will lead to fewer injuries and a more comfortable day.”

Treatment for overuse injuries on the foot begins with rest. Doctors also recommend icing the injury, applying compression wraps or wearing shoe inserts.

In more serious cases, doctors can prescribe an anti-inflammatory or oral steroid. Doctors may also recom-



Dr. Arcuri is a podiatric surgeon who specializes in the medical and surgical care of the foot. Recently, he joined Dr. Terry Holt at the Podiatry Clinic of Jackson, 657 Skyline. For an appointment, call 731-427-5581 or 800-273-3087.

mend injection therapy.

The most severe cases will require immobilization in a boot or even surgery. For patients with plantar fasciitis that has not been relieved with conservative care by a physician, Dr. Arcuri said patients can take advantage of a new, minimally invasive procedure where inflamed plantar fascial tissue is debrided under ultrasound guidance.

“Don’t transition to sandals too fast. A shoe with support will lead to fewer injuries and a more comfortable day.”

well, the patient is back to full activities including exercise at six weeks.”

In addition to a rise in overuse injuries this time of year, Dr. Arcuri sees more children with injuries from spring sports, such as a rolled ankle and heel pain. Heel pain in children, especially boys who are 8 to 12 years old, is a sign of an inflamed growth plate. This can almost always be resolved with heel lifts, a custom orthotic, or a combination of the two.

He also sees more patients who want to clear up unsightly fungal toenails before slipping on the sandals. After a test to determine the type of infection and damage to the nail bed, patients are often prescribed a topical or oral treatment to clear it up.

“Your tendons have to fire or work harder with a sandal on than with a lace-up shoe or boot.”

“There is no long downtime or need for non-weight bearing,” Arcuri said. “The patient wears a surgical boot for two weeks, and then they’re back in their tennis shoe. If all goes



✓ Be kind to your skin this summer

Summer is here, and with it comes a variety of health issues that could mean a trip to the doctor's office. And the best way to handle some of the season's most common ailments, such as sunburn, bee stings, and spider and tick bites, is to take steps to prevent them.

Dr. Patrick Teer, a board-certified dermatologist, said preventing sun damage should be at the top of everyone's list. More than 3.5 million skin cancers are diagnosed in more than 2 million patients in the United States each year.

"The key is to use a sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 15 and apply it frequently."

"During this time of year, the proper use of sunscreens is important," he said. "Everyone should use them, even those with darker skin. The key is to use a sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 15 and apply it frequently."

Wearing wide hats and long sleeves and sitting under an umbrella also help prevent sun damage, he said.

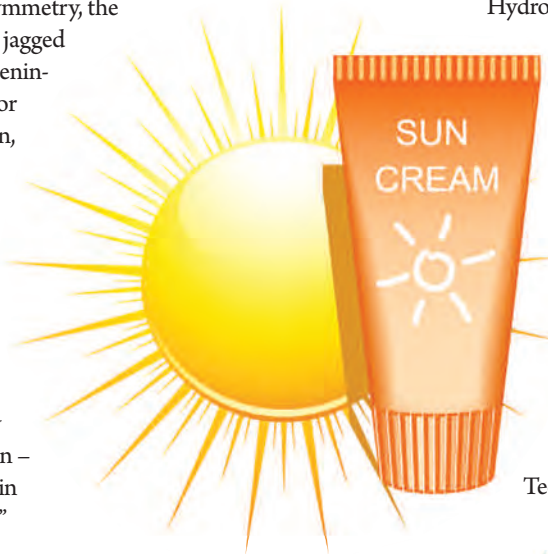
Dr. Teer practices with Dr. Mac Jones, who is also a board-certified dermatologist, at the Dermatology Clinic of Jackson. Both doctors recommend that people should check their skin for indications of skin cancer and see a doctor if any of the following occur ...

- **Basal cell carcinoma**, the most common skin cancer, often starts with a clear or skin-colored growth that bleeds with minor irritation or just doesn't go away.

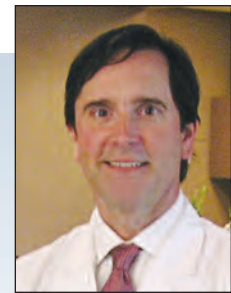
- **Squamous cell carcinoma** can start with a thick and scaly spot on the skin that also may bleed.

- **Melanoma**, the deadliest form of skin cancer, often begins with a brown spot or pigmented lesion that changes its characteristics. Follow the "ABCDs of moles." You should be concerned if: The mole has an imperfect asymmetry, the once-smooth border becomes jagged with "landscaping coves and peninsulas," there's a variation in color or the color bleeds into the skin, or the diameter grows bigger than a pencil eraser.

"Too much exposure to the sun's rays as a child and young adult can lead to skin cancer, as well as wrinkles and brown spots," Dr. Jones said. "It's ironic that people like to get a tan to look healthy and youthful, but too much sun – or a tanning bed – and your skin could pay the price later in life."



Dr. Mac Jones



Dr. Patrick Teer

Dr. Mac Jones and Dr. Patrick Teer are board-certified dermatologists who practice at the Dermatology

Clinic of Jackson, 1320 Union University Drive. For an appointment, visit dermjax.com or call 731.422.7999.

Problems with insects

The severity of a reaction to a bug bite or mosquito sting depends on the individual, Dr. Teer said. So use insect repellents and cover your body with long sleeves and pants if you plan to be outdoors in the garden or woods.

Insect repellent with DEET offers the best protection, but any repellent is better than nothing. You also can rid your yard of mosquitos by installing birdhouses for martins, which feed on mosquitos.

Treating bites depends on the reaction. Begin with over-the-counter ointments that contain hydrocortisone, or take Benadryl.



Spider and Tick Bites

Hydrocortisone cream also can treat spider bites. Or, try the "RICE" therapy of rest, ice compress and elevation to help neutralize the venom and limit its spread, Dr. Jones said.

However, people should see a physician within 24 to 48 hours of the bite if they notice a blister or ulcer, he said. The best treatment for a reaction such as this is an oral prescription medication that should be taken in the first two to three days.

You also should see a doctor if you think you've been bitten by a brown recluse. These bites tend to leave a blue-purple center with a red or white ring.

After spending time outdoors, check for ticks and remove them promptly.

"Get the whole thing with a little piece of the skin," Dr. Teer said. And see your doctor if a rash develops.



✓ Hydration helps prevent heat illness

During exercise or activity, the body's temperature elevates, and the body sweats to cool itself down. When this happens, body fluid and critical electrolytes are lost. If the body isn't replenished with fluids and electrolytes, dehydration may occur and increase the risk of a heat illness.

The risk of heat illnesses is high during the hot, humid days of summer. And the most effective treatment for heat-related illnesses is prevention, said Dr. Scott Johnson, who practices at Sports, Orthopedics and Spine.

Replace fluids before, during and after exertion, he said. Plain water is adequate for events lasting less than one hour. Fluids that are half water and half sports drink are best for strenuous activities that last longer.

Replace fluids before, during and after exertion. Plain water is adequate for events lasting less than one hour. Fluids that are half water and half sports drink are best for strenuous activities that last longer.

"Hydration should begin with 20 ounces of fluid about two hours before exercise," Dr. Johnson said. "Then you should drink 10 ounces of fluid about 20 minutes before exercise and follow up with 10 ounces every 20 minutes during exercise. When the activity is over, continue to drink 20 ounces of fluid every two hours until your urine is clear."

Weighing oneself before and after activity provides good feedback on the level of hydration. Losing more than 2 percent to 3 percent of body weight during exercise may be compromising performance and physiological function.

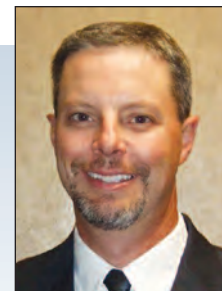
When outdoors, wear clothing that is light colored, loose fitting and limited to one layer. And anyone with a fever, respiratory, gastrointestinal or other illness should not exercise because these conditions increase the risk of heat illness, he said.

For athletes, it's important to have proper training for exercising and playing in the heat, he said. The intensity of physical activity should be appropriate for the athlete's level of fitness.

"In addition to an athletic trainer, other players and coaches also should know how to detect whether someone is developing heat-related problems."

Symptoms of heat illness include: chills, dark-colored urine, dizziness, dry mouth, headaches, thirst and weakness. If heat illness progresses, more serious symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, body temperature increasing to dangerous levels,

Dr. Scott Johnson, a family practitioner with special training in primary care sports medicine, practices at Sports, Orthopedics and Spine in Jackson with orthopedic surgeons Dr. Keith Nord, Dr. John Masterson, Dr. Brad Wright, Dr. David Yakin and Dr. Timothy Sweo. The clinic is at 569 Skyline Drive. For an appointment, call 731-427-7888 or 888-SPORT-DR.



muscle cramps, nausea, tingling of the limbs and even death, may occur.

"When you see any signs of heat illness, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency," Dr. Johnson said. "Have someone call for immediate medical attention while you begin cooling the individual at risk."

Get the person in distress to a shaded area and remove the clothing (except underwear). Immerse the person in cold water, spray him or her with a hose or cool them with cold water sponging, he said. If the individual can drink, provide cold beverages.



✓ Watch out for that plant!

When more people venture outdoors during the summer and come into contact with the flourishing leaves of poison ivy, poison oak or poison sumac, cases of contact dermatitis spike.

An itchy rash develops one to two days after contact. Then the area becomes red and swollen, and small blisters form.

"These blisters itch intensely, but avoid scratching them," said Dr. Kim Howerton, a board-certified family physician. "The rash usually resolves within a week."

"Most people are allergic to urushiol, which is the oil found in the three plants. And some people will have a more severe reaction or rash that covers a large part of the body," Dr. Howerton said.

"These people need to seek medical care, but most people can treat it with over-the-counter medications, such as hydrocortisone cream, calamine lotion, Benadryl and oatmeal baths," she said. "Patients may need to cover the rash to prevent scratching."

"The plants look slightly different, but they cause the same contact dermatitis and symptoms," she said. "They are also treated the same."

She added that the best way to identify and avoid them is to adhere

to the old saying: "Leaflets three, let it be."

Another skin condition that can develop in the hot days of summer is heat rash, which is a red or pink rash usually found on areas of the body covered by clothing. "It's most common in babies, but it can affect adults in hot, humid climates," Dr. Howerton said.

"Heat rash does not usually require medical attention," she said. "However, if it doesn't go away after five to seven days, or if it appears to be getting worse, or if the child develops a fever, please call the doctor."

Heat rash can be prevented by wearing loose, lightweight clothing and avoiding excessive heat and humidity as much as possible.



The poison ivy plant, pictured above, has three leaves.

Food poisoning, continued ...

from dripping on other foods."

It's also important to wash your hands after handling food, and avoid using the same platter or utensils for raw and cooked meat.

"Soap and water are essential to cleanliness, so if you are going somewhere that will not have running water, bring water with you or have disposable wipes on hand," Dr. Howerton said.

Food poisoning symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps and fever. Their onset depends on the bacteria. Staphylococcal food poisoning symptoms can start 30 minutes after eating. Norovirus symptoms begin between 24 and 48 hours, and E. Coli takes two to five days.

"Generally, patients will recover without medical treatment," Dr. Howerton said. "Most cases are mild and clear up in a few days. During that time, the goal is to prevent dehydration. Dehydration is the loss of fluids and electrolytes

that the body needs. Once the patient is feeling better, he or she can ease into eating and drinking again."

Dr. Howerton recommends bland foods, such as crackers, toast and bananas. Avoid spicy foods, fried foods, dairy and foods that are high in fat and sugar. Drink plenty of fluids, but avoid milk or caffeinated beverages.

"Also, sports drinks like Gatorade are not meant to be used to treat diarrhea and do not replace the body's electrolytes correctly to prevent dehydration," she said.

Patients most often recover without medical help, but if any of these symptoms develop, the patient needs to seek medical care, Dr. Howerton said.

Make an appointment with your doctor if:

- ✓ Severe diarrhea lasts for more than three days.
- ✓ Frequent vomiting lasts for more than two days.
- ✓ You see blood in your stool.
- ✓ You are on diuretics and have diarrhea, nausea or vomiting.
- ✓ You have a fever over 101°F.

Seek emergency care if:

- ✓ Your stool is maroon or black or you see a lot of blood in your stool.
- ✓ You are vomiting blood.
- ✓ You are having trouble breathing.
- ✓ You have severe abdominal pain or stomach cramping.
- ✓ You have double vision or trouble moving parts of your body.
- ✓ You have symptoms of severe dehydration – little or no urine, no tears when crying, extreme thirst, severe headache, confusion and dizziness.
- ✓ You have trouble swallowing.
- ✓ You feel like your heart is pounding.
- ✓ You have food poisoning from eating mushrooms or shellfish.

"Damage to the kidneys and red blood cells, passing out from dehydration, and though rarely, even death can occur," she said.

"Risks increase with the very young, the elderly and people with weak immune systems."



Dr. Kimberly Howerton is a board-certified family practice physician with Patient-Centered Physician's Care, P.C. For an appointment, call 731.215.2888.



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What's in the box?

Once bluntly told a former boss that, "if I knew what was in the box, I could sell the box." I remember the air going out of the room as my co-workers and superiors looked down the length of our conference table to where I was sitting, wondering if I should just go ahead and collect my things.

This statement came at the end of a staff meeting where our organization was addressing a growing identity crisis. We were new, young and in way over our heads as we were trying to promote our organization without having a clear understanding as to who or what we were.

"If I know what's in the box, I can sell the box," became somewhat of an underground organizational motto for us, and we sometimes just shortened it to "What's in the box?" (Not to be confused with the closing scene of "Se7en" where Brad Pitt repeats the same question – things didn't work out too well for Brad in that instance.) The general premise of this statement was a simple way of saying, "hey, if we haven't figured out who we are, how can we tell anyone else who we are?"

I want to devote my space in this issue to discussing what's in the box with three different organizations, all of which are seeking to improve and promote health care delivery throughout our region.

■ **West Tennessee Physicians' Alliance (WTPA)** is comprised of over 100 physicians across 25 medical specialties and centered in Jackson, Tennessee. This group allows independent providers the freedom and autonomy to practice medicine and to care for their patients while also enjoying the benefits of collaboration and collective strength. The WTPA was established over 20 years ago and has remained a critical component

By **Dustin Summers**
Executive Director,
West Tennessee Physicians' Alliance

of quality health care throughout West Tennessee.

■ **West Tennessee Primary Care (WTPC)**

is similar in nature to the WTPA. However, this organization is comprised of primary care providers (family practice, internal medicine and pediatrics) and stretches from "river to river and border to border" with member clinics in Paris, Savannah, Jackson, Dyersburg, Lexington and many other communities. While the WTPC is a separate entity, many of its independent primary care physicians have worked to forge strong connections with their specialist counterparts in the WTPA.

■ **West Tennessee Clinical Partners** is a newly established, government-recognized accountable care organization (ACO) that is seeking to reduce Medicare waste while delivering quality care to West Tennessee beneficiaries. The ACO model of care is designed to reward physicians for promoting health behaviors (preventive screenings, annual check-ups, coordination with hospitals and nursing homes, etc.) amongst their patients and to identify areas of inefficiency in the delivery of health care.

Each one of these groups is unique, however all of these organizations seek to provide the highest of quality care while employing innovative approaches to the practice of medicine. While the box is important, the contents, physicians and patients are what make these groups truly special and essentially vital.



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