

Happiness Through Health

by **Otto McClarrip**

What does summertime bring to your mind? Lying at the pool or beach? Hiking in the mountains? Exploring the wilderness? Camping out? Sightseeing adventures.

Any one of these can live up to your dreams as long as you avoid those well-known fun-spoilers: sunburn, insect bites, heat exhaustion, poison ivy. Armed with a few simple precautionary measures, some commonsense and a knowledge of how to cope with each, you can keep them from sabotaging your family's holiday. Here are some ways Public Health Service experts suggest for coping: INSECT BITES are likely to be a greater threat with bans on widespread use of insecticides. Protective clothing and repellants are the best preventives if you're likely to be exposed. Some insects are merely nuisances. Baking soda compresses and ice usually suffice to relieve the discomfort after making sure the stinger is out. Ticks, black widow and brown recluse spiders present a more serious threat of severe, though rarely fatal, illness.

In tick-infested areas, wear long sleeves and tight pants, then check the body carefully and often. Ticks not yet attached should be brushed off and killed. Pull attached ticks away gently so the head and mouth won't remain imbedded. Use tweezers, or in stubborn cases try a hot knife, blade or pin, nail polish or iodine. The danger from ticks is Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (actually more prevalent in the Southeast now).

The two poisonous spiders (black widow with red hourglass marking on its abdomen and the brown recluse with a violin-shaped marking on its back) are unlikely to bite unless they have been disturbed in their hiding places -- such as window sills, foundation cracks, garden debris, etc. If you are bitten consult a physician at once.

HEAT EXHAUSTION is a threat if you over-exert on a hot and humid day. Dress light porous, loose-fitting clothing and step up your salt intake at such times. In the event of mild heat exhaustion (tired, headache, nausea) or if it's severe (perspiration, weakness, pale and clammy skin with possible vomiting and leg or arm cramps), the treatment is the same. Lie in a cool place and take cool salted water (a teaspoon per quart). More rare is heat stroke -- a serious condition marked by high fever and hot, dry skin. The fever should be reduced rapidly by sponging with water or alcohol.

SUNBURN can be avoided by commonsense -- building up gradually those first days at the pool or beach. Arm yourself with a good sun lotion or cream. Toddlers and anyone with sensitive skin need extra protection from the scaring rays. If you do get a burn, cool or tepid baths with colloidal oatmeal will give some relief as will topical local anesthetics such as Solarcaine. A serious burn, of course, need medical attention.

POISON IVY with its clusters of three shiny leaves, is easy to recognize. Teach your children to recognize it -- and poison oak and sumac, too. If you have been exposed, wash promptly (preferably within 5 minutes) with soap and water to remove the oily substance that causes the trouble. Everything exposed -- clothing, pets, tools -- should be washed, too, but handle them cautiously until they've been scrubbed. If a rash develops, simple home remedies will relieve the discomfort until it clears up, but if the reaction is severe, have your doctor treat it immediately. Topical local anesthetics such as Solarcaine will give relief, and calomine lotion will dry the blisters and oozing. Remember that the blister fluid won't spread the rash -- only the original plant secretion. So if it spreads, launder anything that may be tainted -- clothing, sheets, towels.

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