Summer Safety

Summertime brings pool parties, barbecues and sunny days at the beach. Unfortunately, it also brings new dangers. About 1.3 million new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed in the U.S. each year and, in 2010, drowning claimed the lives of 3,600 people. Take protection from the sun and water into your own hands this summer with these helpful tips.

Shield harmful rays

The best way to lower the risk of skin cancer is to avoid intense sunlight for long periods of time and to practice sun safety. Tanning booths and sunlamps are not a safe alternative to natural sun—they use UV rays that can still cause damage. Follow these easy precautions:

• Avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
• Look for shade, especially in the middle of the day when the sun’s rays are strongest
• Cover up with protective clothing to guard as much skin as possible when you are out in the sun
• Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor of 30 or higher; reapply after swimming, toweling dry or perspiring (it is recommended to apply a full ounce with each application)
• Cover your head with a wide-brimmed hat, shading your ears, face and neck

Don’t close your eyes to the danger

Although drowning isn’t age specific, children four years and younger have the highest death rate due to drowning. Most incidents occur when a child falls into a pool or is left alone in the bathtub. Keep yourself and your children safe with these tips:

• Never leave a child alone near water: on the beach, at a pool or in the bathtub
• Take swim lessons – everyone needs the skills to be able to swim
• Follow the 10/20 rule around water (a supervising adult needs to position themselves to scan the area within 10 seconds and reach the water within 20 seconds)
• If you own a pool, make sure to be trained in infant and child CPR
• Never consume alcohol when operating a boat
• Always use approved personal flotation devices
• Don’t underestimate the power of water; even rivers and lakes can have undertows