

the Putnam Valley Health Advisory Council presents . . .

the HAC Helpline #8



Summer Safety

Health Reminders to Help You & Your Family Enjoy a Healthy Vacation

1) Sun Protection

- ◆ **Use Sunscreen!** You are never too young or too old to prevent skin cancer. Don't forget areas like ears, lips, hands, the back of the neck, and the tops of your feet. No matter what the packaging says, it's probably best to reapply sunscreen regularly after swimming and exercising.
- ◆ **Wear a Hat!** It not only protects against sunburn but helps wick away and evaporate body moisture to cool your head.
- ◆ Get a **good pair of sunglasses** and use them. Make sure they provide UV protection for your eyes, which can also become sunburned.
- ◆ Wear **lightweight, light colored clothing** to protect your skin.
- ◆ Remember that tanning can damage skin. Even if you protect yourself against harmful UV rays, excessive tanning—whether at the beach or the tanning salon—can lead to skin damage later in life.

2) Hydration

- ◆ Staying well hydrated helps you beat the heat. Bring water with you wherever you go—in the car, to the beach, to the pool, to sporting events, even to the mall. Sodas and high-fructose corn syrup drinks are not a good substitute for water.

3) Safety

- ◆ **Be aware of poisonous plants and insects** in your area. Learn what poison oak, poison sumac, and poison ivy look like and avoid them. Remember that the vines as well as the leaves contain the oil that causes allergic reac-

tions in many people.

- ◆ Avoid areas where dangerous insects gather. Playgrounds and parks can provide nesting areas for bees, wasps, and hornets. If someone in your family is seriously allergic to insect stings, never leave home without an Epi Pen.

- ◆ **Dress for tick prevention**—high white socks and with your pant legs tucked in are best for walking in woods, yards, and gardens. Do a "tick check" before you enter the house—shake out hair and check & brush off all clothing and skin surfaces. If you do get a tick bite, use tweezers to carefully remove the entire tick and clean the bite thoroughly.

- ◆ **Never swim alone!** Bring a buddy, and watch out for one another. Use beaches that hire lifeguards and obey the lifeguard at all times.

- ◆ **Avoid swimming in unfamiliar streams or ponds.** Never jump or dive into unfamiliar water and don't ever jump off of bridges or cliffs. Wear water shoes to protect your feet from glass, metal, or other hazards.

- ◆ Whether bike riding, roller skating, scootering, or skateboarding, wear a helmet. Wear knee and wrist pads when skating or skateboarding.

4) Use your head:

- ◆ Don't do what other people dare you to do.
- ◆ Don't drink or use drugs. If you choose to drink illegally, don't drive.
- ◆ If you must walk, walk facing **the** oncoming traffic and stay as far off the road as possible. If you walk at dusk or after dark, wear white or reflective

clothing and carry a flashlight or lantern so drivers can see you.

- ◆ Don't start fires in the woods. Even a tiny spark in dry weather can start a brush fire that could threaten you and the homes in your neighborhood.

Right now you're saying to yourself, "How can I have fun with all these "Don'ts?" Here are a few "Do's" to show you how:

- ◆ **DO** spend time every day with family and friends.

- ◆ **DO** get plenty of sleep, and try to stick to a schedule so your body is routinely rested.

- ◆ **DO** make time every day to read, and start your summer reading early so you won't have to play catch-up in August.

- ◆ **DO** take advantage of all the wonderful fresh fruits and vegetables available in the summer. Buy some corn and roast it. Make a pot of sun tea, home-made lemonade, or fresh fruit punch.

- ◆ **DO** take time to "be a kid." It's okay to be lazy and daydream—your mind and body both need some time off.

- ◆ **DO** use the Internet for information and entertainment. Just remember to be safe and smart when you communicate with others.

- ◆ **DO** organize your room, your books and CDs, and your school supplies. Use the summer to get your own living space back in shape. Donate old clothes, books, videos, etc to charities that can use them.

- ◆ **DO** volunteer. Many community groups can use help over the summer.