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New Yorkers in  
Need Since 1922*

The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies promotes the social and economic well-being of greater New York's most vulnerable by strengthening human service organizations and advocating for just public policies.

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# Info Network

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## THE SUMMER ISSUE: BEATING THE HEAT, EATING HEALTHY, & MORE

Summer is here and it is traditionally a popular time for vacations, relaxation and outdoor activity. With kids home from school and enjoying warm weather recreation, parents and other caregivers need to exercise extra diligence to protect them from any dangers associated with these activities. In addition, adults and seniors need to practice good judgment while they are enjoying themselves this season.

This issue offers basic tips and resources for keeping cool and staying safe for the remaining days of summer. You'll find advice for people and pets on preparing for extreme heat and avoiding heat-related illness, safety measures for all kinds of summer activities from swimming to camps to barbecuing and yard work, and a few pointers on health and nutrition during the warmer months. Additionally, we share a few websites where you'll find ideas for some fun, free and low-cost activities in NYC. We hope you'll find this information useful and pass it on to your staff, particularly those working directly with clients.

Please continue to enjoy a safe, healthy and happy summer.

Fatima Goldman, Executive Director/CEO

## SUMMER OUTDOOR SAFETY GUIDE

No matter where you're headed this summer — the country, the tropics, a cruise or taking in the many sights here in the city — many of the activities we all enjoy call for increased attention and adherence to safety measures. This brief guide covers a variety of activities and includes tips everyone should be aware of to avoid accidents that would mar otherwise special memories. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, so it makes sense to take proper precautions, be smart and be prepared.

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## Inside Story Headline

This story can fit 150-200 words.

One benefit of using your newsletter as a promotional tool is that you can reuse content from other marketing materials, such as press releases, market studies, and reports.

While your main goal of distributing a newsletter might be to sell your product or service, the key to a successful newsletter is making it useful to your readers.

A great way to add useful content to your newsletter is to develop and write your own articles, or include a calendar of upcoming events or a special offer that promotes a new prod-

uct.

You can also research articles or find "filler" articles by accessing the World Wide Web. You can write about a variety of topics but try to keep your articles short.

Much of the content you put in your newsletter can also be used for your Web site. Microsoft Publisher offers a simple way to convert your newsletter to a Web publication. So, when you're finished writing your newsletter, convert it to a Web site and post it.

### Swimming Safety

- Never leave a child unsupervised in a swimming pool, even if they know how to swim.
- Be prepared in case of emergency. Keep rescue equipment by the pool and be sure a phone is poolside with emergency numbers listed.
- For swimming pools at home, install a fence or other barrier at least four feet high completely around the pool. Fence gates should be self-closing and self-latching.
- Remove toys from poolside. They can attract unsupervised children to play near the pool.

NYC is full of parks, museums, beaches and other great indoor and outdoor destination for people of all ages to enjoy. Please visit the following websites for more information on exciting things to do in the city this summer:

#### **Summer Guide 2007:**

***Absolutely Doable Fun for All***—This guide includes everything from free cookouts to urban beaches.

[www.villagevoice.com/nyclife](http://www.villagevoice.com/nyclife)

***NYC Youth Guide to Summer Fun 2007***— Learn about free or low cost ways to have fun this summer in every borough. Available from the NYC Dept. of Youth and Community Development:

[www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/html/resources-youth-summerfun.html](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/html/resources-youth-summerfun.html)

### Playground Safety

- Carefully supervise children on play equipment.
- Install and maintain a shock-absorbing surface around the play equipment. Protective surfacing should be at least six feet in all directions from play equipment.
- Make sure platforms and ramps have guardrails.
- Eliminate sharp points or edges from equipment.
- Avoid risk of strangulation: Never attach ropes, clotheslines or pet leashes to play equipment.

### Barbecue Safety

- Always supervise a barbecue grill when in use.
- Make sure grills are used a safe distance from homes, fences, plants and garden furniture.
- Keep children and pets far away from grills in use.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions regarding the operation and repair of grills.
- In case of a fire emergency, call 911!

### Theme Park Safety

- Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water a day or so prior to the trip and choose water over soft drinks and juice while in the park.
- Put on a waterproof sunscreen before you enter the park, and reapply it throughout the day.
- Follow instructions. Read the boarding restrictions for all rides. If applicable, get appropriate restriction guidelines for persons with disabilities, children and adult riders.

## SUMMER OUTDOOR SAFETY GUIDE

- Wait a few minutes after eating before boarding high-speed rides that twist, turn or dip.
- Explain to children how to behave on specific rides and tell them to follow the rules (stay seated, keep hands and feet inside the ride, etc.). Adults should set a good example by following rules as well.

### Boat and Watercraft Safety

- In NYS, you must be 18 years or older to operate a motorboat alone. Individuals between 10 and 18 must have a person 18 or older on board, or hold a safety certificate.
- To obtain a safety certificate, you must complete the New York Safe Boating Course sponsored by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation. Contact: <http://nysparks.state.ny.us/boats/yb/>
- New York law requires the use of one approved life jacket per passenger on pleasure vessels. The jacket should be the right size, should not be loose and should always be worn as instructed with all straps belted.
- Individuals must follow New York laws regarding required equipment, such as fire extinguishers, navigation lights and sound signals. The information can be found at: <http://nysparks.state.ny.us/boats/equip/>

### Yard Work Safety

- Read safety manuals before using new tools.
- Never let children play on or around lawnmowers, especially riding mowers. More than 800 children are injured annually by riding mowers.
- Only responsible adults should operate lawnmowers and handle equipment.
- Never operate lawn mowers or handle equipment while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

### Camp Safety

In New York State, summer camps must have a state, city or county health department permit to operate legally. These permits are issued only if the camp is in compliance with the State's health regulations. Additionally, the camp must be inspected twice a year by a health department representative, where it is evaluated to make sure physical facilities are safe and that supervision is adequate.

In choosing a summer camp, consider the following:

- Credentials and qualifications of the camp director – overnight camp directors must be at least 25 years old or hold a bachelor's degree, and day camp directors must be at least 21 years old.
- What are the qualifications of the camp counselors? What are the mandated training course requirements? What percentage have had previous experience supervising children? Are they screened for child abuse?
- Health - ask about medical coverage and find out the procedure for handling ill or injured children. Is a doctor or nurse in residence or on call for campers at all times?

## SUMMER NUTRITION AND HEALTH

Summertime often means a change in eating habits. For some of us, it means a bit of overindulgence and unhealthy food choices. Eating right and exercising are the keys to weight control. Consider these ideas:

**Eat breakfast.** Regular meals and a few low-cal snacks during the day help prevent piling on big lunches and dinners. Try a high-fiber cereal, whole-grain bread or fresh fruit.

**Serve** yourself half the amount you usually eat, if you tend to eat whatever is in front of you. Use smaller plates to make less food look like more.

**Take your time.** It takes approximately 20 minutes for your brain to receive the signal that you're full. Eating quickly may lead to overeating. Chew slowly, set down your utensils between bites or play soothing background music, which tends to slow the meal.

**Drink water.** It keeps you hydrated and can make you feel full between meals.

**Cook or eat healthy.** Fish, skinless chicken and vegetables are good choices.

**Control cholesterol.** Use oils that contain monosaturated fats, such as olive oil or canola oil. Stay away from fried foods. Try 2%, 1% or skim milk. Eat eggs in moderation (3 per week is suggested).

**Choose healthy food.** Fruits, salads, bottled water and juice are all great, quick options for a healthy meal. Be sure to wash salad goods and fruits, including watermelon or cantaloupe.

## AVOIDING HEAT EXHAUSTION OR HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS

Heat-related illness occurs when the human body is unable to properly cool itself. The body normally cools itself by sweating, which isn't enough when a person's body temperature rises rapidly. Very high body temperatures may damage the body's vital organs.

People ages 65 and older and young children are especially vulnerable to heat illness. The risk of heat illness goes up during exertion and sports and with certain health conditions such as diabetes, obesity and heart disease. Alcohol use also increases the risk as do medications that slow sweat production, such as antihistamines, tricyclic antidepressants and diuretics used to treat water retention, high blood pressure and some liver and kidney conditions. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 300 deaths in the U.S. were caused by excessive heat exposure in 2001.

Automobiles are a leading cause of heat-related deaths. During the summer of 2003, at least 42 children in the United States died after being left in hot cars, according to Jan Null, a meteorologist in San Francisco who tracks heat-related deaths. What some people don't realize is that the temperature inside a car can climb much higher than temperatures outside during a sunny day. Heat stroke in children can occur within minutes, even if a car window is opened slightly. Similarly, many pets left unattended in cars die needlessly each year.

Excessive heat in humans and animals can progress very suddenly to heat stroke, which can be fatal. Care must be taken to balance summertime activity with measures that aid the body's cooling mechanisms and prevent heat-related illness.

### What You Can Do

Air conditioning is the number one protective factor against heat illness. If you don't have air conditioning, spend time in public facilities, such as libraries and malls that do have it. In your home, open windows to let air circulate, and cover windows to keep direct sun out. Reduce strenuous activities or do them during early mornings and evenings when it's cooler. If you're outside for long stretches of time, carry a water bottle, drink fluids regularly and don't push your limits. People who play sports should wear light, loose-fitting clothes and drink water or sports drinks before, during and after activity. Avoid hot or heavy meals.

If you see someone experiencing heat illness, have the person lie down in a cool place and elevate their legs. Use water, wet towels, and fanning to help cool the person down until emergency help comes. *For pets:* Never leave pets unattended in a car, even for a few minutes. For caged pets, make sure that the sun doesn't shine directly on the cage during the day. Brush animals regularly and don't trim their hair, as that is a natural cooling mechanism. Always keep water available and be sure your pet always has access to a cool place.

### Cooling Centers

When the heat index is predicted to be dangerously high, New York City opens cooling centers in air-conditioned public facilities to offer people relief. Individuals experiencing physical discomfort, or who have no ready access to a cool environment, should use the cooling centers. The New York City Housing Authority and Department for the Aging operate cooling facilities at community and senior centers in all five boroughs. You can also call **311** (TTY: 212-504-4115) during a heat emergency to find the location of a cooling center or pool, or visit the New York City Office of Emergency Management at [www.nycoem.gov](http://www.nycoem.gov) and use the finder to locate a cooling center near you.