Kick Off a Safe Summer and Protect Yourself and Your Family from COVID-19

10 ways to celebrate the holiday and enjoy summer safely

Hartford, Mich. – As the holiday weekend approaches and summer begins, residents across Michigan will spend more time outdoors enjoying the sun and fun. Van Buren/Cass District Health Department wants to remind everyone to keep safety in mind at the beach, in the sun, cooking on the grill, mowing the lawn, and playing outside. While you’re enjoying all that summer in Michigan has to offer, VBCDHD urges residents not to forget to protect yourself and your family from COVID-19.

Here are 10 ways you can celebrate the holiday and enjoy summer safely and responsibly:

1. **Keep your social distance and avoid congregating.** Even with family and friends, keep the guest list for your gatherings to the people you live with. If you visit an area with higher foot traffic (like a public beach), maintain 6ft social distance between you and others and don’t forget to wear your mask.

2. **Consider activities or spaces where social distance comes naturally.** Enjoy a hike in the woods, a walk along the trail, the pool or lake in your backyard, or your personal cottage up north. By pre-planning your activities, it will make it easier to maintain a 6ft physical distance.

3. **Assemble a coronavirus kit for the road.** If you plan to leave your home for the day or the weekend, pack a kit to help you practice safe hygiene. Include face masks/coverings for everyone in your family, disinfecting wipes, hand sanitizer, and tissues. Don’t forget the sunscreen and hats, too!

4. **If you or someone in your household feels ill, stay home.** Help stop the spread of COVID-19 by staying home and avoiding contact with others at any sign of illness. As a reminder, common COVID-19 symptoms include fever, chills, dry cough, difficulty breathing, acute loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting.

5. **Know where to locate emergency health services if you’re traveling.** Locate hospitals and pharmacies near your destination in case you need to access a doctor, first aid kit or medicine.

6. **Protect your skin.** Sunscreen is important for all skin types and should be applied 15 minutes before sun exposure and reapplied every two hours or after contact with water or excessive sweat. Even just five first degree burns can double your risk for melanoma.
7. **Practice water safety.** Never let children swim alone; adults should keep an eye on them at all times. Avoid alcohol and be cautious around natural bodies of water. If you do get caught in a rip current, remain calm, don’t fight the current, swim parallel to shore until you are released from it, then swim to shore.

8. **Stay hydrated.** It’s easy to forget to stay hydrated when having fun but with the change in temperature, it’s even more important. Pack a water bottle for each family member when leaving the house and take frequent breaks in the shade. Experts recommend drinking 8oz every 15-20 minutes when in the heat.

9. **Keep the bugs away.** Avoid tall grass and standing water. Use insect repellent containing DEET. Always do a full body check when coming indoors. If you find a tick, remove it with fine tweezers as close to the skin as possible. Pull upward with steady even pressure. Clean the bite area and hands.

10. **Don’t forget grill safety.** Only take meat and other temperature sensitive food items out of your cooler or fridge for as long as you need them and promptly place unused items back in the cooler. When filling your cooler, package raw food separately - try using re-sealable plastic bags.

For more tips on how to stay safe this summer and protect yourself from COVID-19, follow Van Buren/Cass District Health Department on Facebook (search “VBCDHD”) or visit [www.vbcassdhd.org](http://www.vbcassdhd.org).

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