

**Ask the Expert**  
*Arizona Republic*

**Q: What are some things I can do to keep my family stay safe this summer?**

**A:** According to the National Healing Corporation, an organization that trains health care professionals on the latest therapies for chronic wounds, people spend more time outdoors and take part in different activities during the summer months, which can cause more injuries and illness.

There are several tips to help keep you and your family safe this summer, including:

- Stay hydrated to avoid heat exhaustion. Children, the elderly and those with high blood pressure are at an increased risk for heat exhaustion.
- Wash your hands after being outside. Dirty hands are a primary source of infection.
- Apply insect repellent to help reduce exposure to mosquito bites that may carry viruses.
- Avoid Lyme disease, which most often occurs in the spring and summer months, by wearing light-colored clothing so you can see ticks. Cover your skin with long-sleeved shirts, long pants and a hat when out hiking, gardening or camping.
- Break in new shoes before wearing them on a hike or vacation. People with diabetes should be especially careful because they are at higher risk for chronic foot wounds.
- Never make your own fireworks or relight a “dud.”
- Avoid recreational water illnesses by following public health warnings posted at beaches and lakes, especially since even very small amounts of sewage or animal waste can infect open sores or be accidentally swallowed.

If you enjoy an occasional pedicure, make sure the spa disinfects their equipment nightly and between each customer. Because microorganisms can enter through skin, avoid a foot spa if you have removed hair from the legs less than 24 hours before or if you have open wounds such as bug bites, bruises, scratches or rashes such as poison ivy.

Should you have any open wounds that are slow to heal, make an appointment with your doctor. They may suggest you visit a specialist with extensive knowledge in the treatment of chronic, slow healing wounds.



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