



June 2017

## Summer Camping Safety — And Fun Too!

Camping is a fun way to get family and friends together in the outdoors. Whether you're planning an overnight at a riverside campground or an entire week backpacking in the wilderness, preparation will make the difference between a fun adventure and one filled with mishaps. Follow these tips to make sure your stay in the great outdoors is safe and healthy.

### Safe water

You're going to get thirsty, probably very thirsty, when you're hiking, climbing and enjoying nature. Don't forget that cooking and cleaning up back at the campsite require even more water. When you reserve your campsite, be sure to ask if the water is safe to drink.

When you're in the backcountry, even the most pristine brook can be contaminated with bacteria, viruses or parasites that can make you sick. Boiling water for 1 minute at sea level (or 3 minutes above 2,000 feet) will kill all pathogens. Portable water purifiers can be effective as well. Look for a purifier with a ceramic filter with a chemical disinfectant matrix.

### Healthy, safe food

You can't live on s'mores alone. Pack healthy foods that support active recreation. Whole grains, nuts and seeds, beans and lentils, fresh and dried fruits and veggies are a good place to start. Camping with a large group? Before your trip, schedule who is going to cook on specific days. Prevent foodborne illness with these steps:

- Pack foods in lock-tight plastic bags or airtight containers. Keep them in an insulated cooler.
- Wash your hands often. Use hand sanitizer if water is not available. Work on a clean work surface.
- Separate raw foods from cooked foods.
- Cook meats to proper temperatures (for instance, hamburgers should be cooked to 160°F).

### Safe activity

Going camping is a great way to get physical activity.

- Hiking, climbing, canoeing or swimming are just some of the ways to have fun when camping.
- Bring protective gear, such as sturdy shoes and life jackets.
- Never hike or swim alone.
- Know your limits, and take steps to avoid injury during activities.

## QuickTakes



### Summer Safety

Knowledge and awareness combined with insect repellent and sunscreen can go a long way to keep you and your family bite-free and sunburn-free this summer. To stay itch-free, you'll need to recognize three poisonous plants.

Poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac all contain the dreaded urushiol, which causes a skin rash upon contact. The best prevention is to avoid contact with these plants. Use your smartphone to help identify them when you're outdoors. Teach family members which plants to avoid. If you do come in contact with any of these plants:

- Immediately rinse your skin with rubbing alcohol, dishwashing soap or detergent.
- Wash your clothing.

If you don't wash off the urushiol, blisters may appear within hours or a few days. Use wet compresses, calamine lotion or an antihistamine to help reduce itching and blistering. The rash may last two to three weeks.

Keep this month's newsletter handy when planning your next camping trip. And enjoy your time outdoors this summer.

### Keep your distance from wild animals

Some wild animals carry diseases that are dangerous to people. It's very rare but some wild animals may bite people. Remember:

- Never touch or approach wild animals, and you should definitely not feed them.
- Enjoy watching animals from a safe distance. Keep the binoculars handy!
- Store food in sealed containers and out of the reach of animals. Some recreation areas require overnight campers to store food in bear-resistant canisters.

### Fight the bite

Furry creatures aren't the only animals that could bite; insects like mosquitoes, ticks and black flies are certain to bite. Be sure to:

- Protect yourself with an EPA-registered insect repellent containing DEET. Please follow the instructions on the package.
- Wear light-colored, lightweight long-sleeved shirts and long pants when camping in a region known to have ticks that transmit Lyme disease.
- Check yourself and your kids for ticks at the end of the day. Remove ticks promptly.

### Campfire safety

Everyone loves sitting around the campfire after an active day outdoors. But untended campfires can, and sometimes do, start wildfires. Smokey Bear recommends that you:

- Check with the camp staff to find out if campfires are allowed and where they are allowed.
- Do not build a campfire in dry, windy or hazardous conditions.
- Site your fire at least 15 feet away from tents, shrubs and trees. Keep it away from fuel like logs, brush and decaying leaves.
- Make sure children and pets are supervised near the fire.
- Let the wood die down to ash if possible. To extinguish the fire, pour lots of water on all the embers, not just the red ones. Pour until the hissing sound stops.

Sources: "Camping Health and Safety Tips," CDC (Centers for Disease Control, Family Health, page reviewed December 23, 2015). "Smokey Bear's Campfire Safety Guide." [smokeybear.com](http://smokeybear.com), 2017.

## Tropical Trail Mix Makes about 10 cups (1/3 cup per serving)

Between the nuts and the dried fruits, trail mix is a concentrated source of calories, making it ideal for a long day of hiking. But if the only trail you're beating is the one from your desk to the coffee machine stick to a single portion.

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups crunchy whole-grain cereal such as mini-shredded wheat, multi-grain squares or graham clusters
- 4 ounces dried mangos, sliced into small pieces
- 4 ounces dried pineapple, sliced into small pieces
- 3/4 cup (2 oz) banana chips
- 1 cup (2 oz) unsweetened large coconut flakes
- 1 cup (4 oz) cashews or almonds
- 1/2 cup (2 oz) pumpkin or sunflower seeds
- 1 cup (4 oz) bittersweet chocolate chips

### DIRECTIONS

1. Mix all ingredients in a large bowl.
2. Transfer to a large, airtight container or scoop into individual lock-tight plastic bags.

Source: Healthy Living Kitchens



### NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

202 Calories  
 10 g Fat  
 3 g Saturated fat  
 5 g Protein  
 18 g Carbohydrate  
 4 g Dietary fiber  
 68 mg Sodium