



BURNS, BITES & BREAKS

FIRST AID 101

BY CHRIS MURRAY

Summer means vacations to unknown areas and unfamiliar surroundings with exotic bugs, animals and plants...even in the US. If you've ever been to the Southeastern US and then the Northwestern United States, you can attest to the huge differences in topography, plant and animal life. Staying safe even in foreign surroundings is easy if you know a few basics.

What can go wrong? Heck, we're human. If something can go wrong, it will. Your first step is to have a basic First Aid Kit in your car including an emergency roadside kit with flairs, wooden waterproof matches, blankets and bottled water. Drugstore.com carries all of these. And don't forget the fire extinguisher and a box of baking soda, (baking soda works on grease fires in case the fire extinguisher fails to deploy. It's a good idea to keep a box next to your stove as well). Summer is for bar-b-queing, not car-b-queing and I seem to pass at least one car-b-que a month on the LA freeways.

Of the situations that can go wrong, these are the most common.

- **HEAT STROKE**
- **CUTS**
- **BURNS**
- **BROKEN BONE**
- **INSECT & SPIDER BITES**
- **ANIMAL BITES**
- **CHOKING**
- **ALLERGIC REACTIONS**

Do some research ahead of time on the poisonous plants and insects common to your destination. If bringing children, make sure they know what these look like. I like to print pictures off the Internet and create flash cards that we play with in the car. I also attach a reward, (ice cream or something) if they can spot these things while we're out and about. This forces the children to be vigilant and makes a game out of keeping them safe.

Contact the visitor information when you arrive for any updates on danger areas or hazards. Bring a hat and sunglasses, even for children. Above all, even if it is a day hike, make sure someone, the ranger or friend knows your destination, place of departure and expected time of return. The majority of injuries, lost children and problems occur on

day hikes. If they don't know you're out there, they will not know to look and if you're heavily injured, this could mean the difference between life and death.

Don't rely on your cell phone being your lifeline. It could break or fail to get a signal. It's best to have two adults (or a responsible teen) on present for any activity involving children. If one of you gets injured, the other can go for help. Remember that adults over sixty and children do not have the same stamina of an adult in his or her prime. Heat stroke, hypothermia and dehydration hit children and the elderly much quicker than the average adult. See [12-TIPS FOR A HEART SMART VACATION](#)

With the basics down, the following precaution and remedies address the most common summer injuries

HEAT STROKE

Preventing it

- [Sun block with an SPF of 15](#) up to 30; anything over 30 SPF is superfluous. Just remember to reapply at regular intervals and don't forget your [FEET](#).
- A hat. It can be as simple as getting your head out of the direct sunlight.
- Sunglasses are not so much to protect your eyes, as it is the keep you from squinting. This will keep you from getting so tired so quickly and also reduce headaches cause by the glare of the sun.
- Water is as important as sun block keeping yourself well hydrated reducing your chance of having heatstroke.

HEAT SAFETY TIPS HELP KEEP PEOPLE COOL

With higher than normal temperatures predicted for much of the country, the American Red Cross urges people to beat the heat and prepare for the first heat wave of the summer season. As temperatures climb over 90 degrees (F) and stay there for several days, people, especially the very young and the very old, become susceptible to heat and heat-related illnesses. Heat-related illnesses can cause serious injury and even death if unattended. Signs of heat-related illnesses include nausea, dizziness, flushed or pale skin, heavy sweating and headaches. Victims of heat-related illness should be moved to a cool place, given cool water to drink and ice packs or cool wet cloths should be applied to the skin. If a victim refuses water, vomits or loses consciousness, 9-1-1 or your local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) number should be called immediately.

The Red Cross advises the following tips on how to stay cool:

IN THE HOT WEATHER...

- Dress for the heat. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Light colors will reflect away some of the sun's energy. It is also a good idea to wear hats or to use an umbrella.

- Drink water. Carry water or juice with you and drink continuously even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which dehydrate the body.
- Eat small meals and eat more often. Avoid foods that are high in protein, which increase metabolic heat.
- Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.
- Slow down. Avoid strenuous activity. If you must do strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning between 4:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- Stay indoors when possible.

KNOW WHAT THESE HEAT-RELATED TERMS MEAN

- Heat wave: More than 48 hours of high heat (90 F or higher) and high humidity (80 percent relative humidity or higher) are expected.
- Heat index: A number in degrees Fahrenheit that tells how hot it really feels with the heat and humidity. Exposure to full sunshine can increase the heat index by 15 F.
- Heat cramps: Heat cramps are muscular pains and spasms due to heavy exertion. They usually involve the abdominal muscles or the legs. It is generally thought that the loss of water and salt from heavy sweating causes the cramps.
- Heat exhaustion: Heat exhaustion is less dangerous than heat stroke. It typically occurs when people exercise heavily or work in a warm, humid place where body fluids are lost through heavy sweating. Fluid loss causes blood flow to decrease in the vital organs, resulting in a form of shock. With heat exhaustion, sweat does not evaporate as it should, possibly because of high humidity or too many layers of clothing. As a result, the body is not cooled properly. Signals include cool, moist, pale or flushed skin; heavy sweating; headache; nausea or vomiting; dizziness; and exhaustion. Body temperature will be near normal.
- Heat stroke: Also known as sunstroke, heat stroke is life-threatening. The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly. Signals include hot, red and dry skin; changes in consciousness; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid, shallow breathing. Body temperature can be very high -- sometimes as high as 105 F.

GENERAL CARE FOR HEAT EMERGENCIES...

1. Cool the Body
 2. Give Fluids
 3. Minimize Shock
- Heat cramps/heat exhaustion: Get the person to a cooler place and have him or her rest in a comfortable position. Give a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Do not let him or her drink too quickly. Do not give liquids with alcohol or caffeine in them, as they can make conditions worse. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths such as towels or wet sheets.

- Heat stroke: Heat stroke is a life-threatening situation! Help is needed fast. Call 9-1-1 or your local EMS number. Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the body. Wrap wet sheets around the body and fan it. If you have ice packs or cold packs, wrap them in a cloth and place them on each of the victim's wrists and ankles, in the armpits and on the neck to cool the large blood vessels. (Do not use rubbing alcohol because it closes the skin's pores and prevents heat loss.) Watch for signals of breathing problems and make sure the airway is clear. Keep the person lying down.

CUTS

Small cuts and abrasions, if you bring a small Backpacker's first aid kit this should have everything in it. If you decide to put one together yourself to make sure it at least has.

- Scissors or some type of cutting-edge instrument.
- Small bandages or gauze.
- Antiseptic (spray, or gel)

For gushing wounds, reduce the bleeding by raising the wound above your heart (even if this requires lying down at an angle), apply pressure with a clean rag and contact emergency personnel. A tourniquet functions as a last resort. If an EMT or medical personnel sees a tourniquet, they will not remove it and presume the appendage is dead. Once the appendage is dead, the only recourse is amputation. The reason for that is, if the arm does not have circulation for a certain amount of time, the blood coagulates, leading to potential blockages that can cause death.

BURNS

They're different severity to Burns, and a first-degree second-degree and a third-degree burn. Each one is progressively worse.

The most common **FIRST-DEGREE BURN** is sunburn. This is irritating and maybe very uncomfortable, and even slightly painful. There is no immediate danger. But you should try to avoid it.

A **SECOND-DEGREE BURN** covers extremely bad sunburn, showing signs of blistering. Perhaps even scalding by hot water being burnt on a stove. This should be treated its as if it was a serious injury with running cold water, and burn ointment from a first aid kit.

A **THIRD-DEGREE** burn is rare. This where there is actually charring and usually occurs from residential fires or exposure to intense heat. Third degree burns require immediate medical attention. Do not touch the burn, put grease on it or attempt to treat this yourself.

BROKEN BONE.

Look inside an ambulance and you'll see a small pile of cardboard strips and tape. This is for stabilizing broken bones or dislocated shoulders, this commonly referred to as "arts and crafts" in the EMT world. In the absence of these tools, your first consideration is stabilizing the bone by using a splint. Do not set it, meaning do not try to make it fit or straight again. You want to prevent it from moving but let the experts set it.

Do not move someone who has fallen on their back or twisted their neck. You don't know if a rib has broken, moving could puncture a lung, kidney, the heart or cause paralysis by severing any number of nerves if not done correctly. The only exception to this is if fire or eminent danger is present and not moving the person would result in death.

For broken arms and other appendages, tape and cardboard are the easiest methods but tree branches and bandanas can work in a pinch. Along with the tape in the cardboard use gauze to secure the makeshift split. If it happens to be a compound fracture (that's where the bone is visible through the skin) work around the bone and do not touch it. Remember, your only job is to stabilize the break and prevent it from getting worse. Medical professionals will fix it.

INSECT & SPIDER BITES AVOIDING INSECT BITES

Most people's greatest fear is being bit by spider, yet few dangerous spiders and insect exist. We have the infamous Brown Recluse, Scorpions and the ever-popular Black Widow, this is what you need to do if you become lunch.

Do not try to suck out the poison. This folk remedy is usually associated with snakes but doesn't do anything to make it better and you'll waste valuable time. Try not to move; this speeds up your blood circulation and the poison's ability to enter your entire body

It is generally known that you're always within 3 feet of a spider. It is unusual to be bitten by a dangerous spider. But if you happen to be bitten by a Brown Recluse (also known as the Violin Spider, due to the small violin on its abdomen) the only thing you can do is, limit movement and immediately get to a hospital.

ANIMAL BITES

Eliminating the risk continues to be your best strategy. Explain to children that animals are like people and sometimes they don't like to be touched and get grouchy. The only way an animal can say no, is to growl or bite, or to lay its ears back, arch its back or lower its head. Let your children know this is how animals talk and to move away from any animal doing these things. Instruct them not to approach animals they do not know and the chances of getting bit, diminish.

Of course, children do not always listen. With animal bites there are two dangers, the bite itself and the damage it does to the body. This should be treated as a cut with serious bites needing professional care.

The second danger is any infectious diseases that the animal may be carrying. If possible, monitor the animal that bit you. For serious attacks alert the owner, Animal Control and the police. Rabies is rare in the United States, but distemper and other diseases are not.

CAUSES AND SIGNALS OF CHOKING

Did you know that more than 3,000 people die each year as a result of choking? Would you be able to recognize if a family member or friend started to choke? Do you know what activities might lead to choking? Here are some common causes of choking:

- Trying to swallow large pieces of poorly chewed food.
- Drinking alcohol before or during meals. Alcohol dulls the nerves that aid in swallowing.
- Wearing dentures. Dentures make it difficult to sense whether food is fully chewed before it is swallowed.
- Eating while talking excitedly or laughing.
- Eating too fast.
- Walking, playing, or running with food or objects in the mouth.

These are just some of the causes of choking. If you want to learn more about the signals of choking or the care needed to give to a person who is choking, take an American Red Cross CPR and First Aid Course.

Follow these safety precautions to help prevent children from choking:

- Don't leave small objects, such as buttons, coins and beads within an infant's reach.
- Have children sit in a high chair or at a table while they eat.
- Do not let children eat too fast.
- Give infants soft food that they do not need to chew.
- Make sure that toys are too large to be swallowed.
- Do not give infants and young children foods like nuts, grapes, popcorn or raw vegetables.
- Make sure that toys have no small parts that could be pulled off.
- Cut foods a child can choke on easily, such as hot dogs, into small pieces.
- Supervise children while they eat.

ALLERGIC REACTIONS

There are the allergies you are aware of, and those you are not. Any time you travel, you risk the possibility of encountering an allergy you never knew you had. Over the counter medications like Benedryl work on most common problems. Make sure everyone in your group is aware of any medical allergies each of you has. I usually keep a list of these

along with the contact number in case of an emergency for anyone I'm traveling with in my wallet.

The most common treatment by medical personnel for allergies is an EpiPen, (EPINEPHRINE). If you need to inject someone, read the directions included in the packaging and be careful not to place your thumb over the top of the pen, a natural reaction when injecting into the leg which will cause the full dosage going into your thumb. They won't get the medicine and you could lose your thumb.

If you don't have treatments available and the allergic reaction is unknown, get to a doctor fast. Some reactions cause horrendous side effects and can close off your ability to breath, inflame organs or appendages.

TIPS FROM THE RED CROSS

FOR SUMMER SAFETY

Are You Ready for the Summer? Remember to Be Safe!

School's out, pools are open and people across the country are looking for fun ways to cool down as summer temperatures heat up. As you head to the beach, to the pool, or to the mountains for a camping vacation, the American Red Cross encourages you and your family to keep safety in mind!

WATER SAFETY

The Red Cross has many water safety tips to keep your family safe this summer. These safety tips are divided up into various categories for specialized aquatic activities.

General Water Safety

- Learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim. Always swim with a buddy; never swim alone. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. To enroll in a swim course, contact your local Red Cross chapter.
- Swim in supervised areas only.
- Obey all rules and posted signs.
- Watch out for the "dangerous too's"--too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.
- Don't mix alcohol and swimming. Alcohol impairs your judgment, balance, and coordination, affects your swimming and diving skills, and reduces your body's ability to stay warm.
- Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts. Stop swimming at the first indication of bad weather.
- Know how to prevent, recognize, and respond to emergencies.

Beach Safety

- Protect your skin: Sunlight contains two kinds of UV rays -- UVA increases the risk of skin cancer, skin aging, and other skin diseases. UVB causes sunburn and can lead to skin cancer. Limit the amount of direct sunlight you receive between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and wear a sunscreen with a sun protection factor containing a high rating such as 15.
- Drink plenty of water regularly and often even if you do not feel thirsty. Your body needs water to keep cool. Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine in them. They can make you feel good briefly but make the heat's effects on your body worse. This is especially true with beer, which dehydrates the body.

- Watch for signs of heat stroke: Heat stroke is life-threatening. The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly. Signals include hot, red, and dry skin; changes in consciousness, rapid, weak pulse, and rapid, shallow breathing. Call 9-1-1 or your local EMS number. Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the body by wrapping wet sheets around the body and fan it. If you have ice packs or cold packs, place them on each of the victim's wrists and ankles, in the armpits and on the neck to cool the large blood vessels. Watch for signals of breathing problems and make sure the airway is clear. Keep the person lying down.
- Wear eye protection: Sunglasses are like sunscreen for your eyes and protect against damage that can occur from UV rays. Be sure to wear sunglasses with labels that indicate that they absorb at least 90 percent of UV sunlight.
- Wear foot protection: Many times, people's feet can get burned from the sand or cut from glass in the sand.

Boating

- Learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim. This includes anyone participating in any boating activity. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. To enroll in a swim course, contact your local Red Cross chapter.
- Alcohol and boating don't mix. Alcohol impairs your judgment, balance, and coordination. Over 50 percent of drownings result from boating incidents involving alcohol. For the same reasons it is dangerous to operate an automobile while under the influence of alcohol, people should not operate a boat while drinking alcohol.
- Look for the label: Use Coast Guard-approved life jackets for yourself and your passengers when boating and fishing.
- Develop a float plan. Anytime you go out in a boat, give a responsible person details about where you will be and how long you will be gone. This is important because if the boat is delayed because of an emergency, becomes lost, or encounters other problems, you want help to be able to reach you.
- Find a boating course in your area (Red Cross, U.S. Power Squadron, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, US Sailing, etc). These courses teach about navigation rules, emergency procedures and the effects of wind, water conditions, and weather.
- Watch the weather: Know local weather conditions and prepare for electrical storms. Watch local news programs. Stop boating as soon as you see or hear a storm.

Home Pools

- Learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim--this includes adults and children. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. To enroll in a

- course to learn or improve your ability to swim, contact your local Red Cross chapter.
- Never leave a child unobserved around water. Your eyes must be on the child at all times. Adult supervision is recommended.
 - Install a phone by the pool or keep a cordless phone nearby so that you can call 9-1-1 in an emergency.
 - Learn Red Cross CPR and insist that babysitters, grandparents, and others who care for your child know CPR.
 - Post CPR instructions and 9-1-1 or your local emergency number in the pool area.
 - Enclose the pool completely with a self-locking, self-closing fence with vertical bars. Openings in the fence should be no more than four inches wide. If the house is part of the barrier, the doors leading from the house to the pool should remain locked and be protected with an alarm that produces sounds when the door is unexpectedly opened.
 - Never leave furniture near the fence that would enable a child to climb over the fence.
 - Always keep basic lifesaving equipment by the pool and know how to use it. Pole, rope, and personal flotation devices (PFDs) are recommended.
 - Keep toys away from the pool when it is not in use. Toys can attract young children into the pool.
 - Pool covers should always be completely removed prior to pool use.
 - To learn more about home pool safety, you can purchase the video "It Only Takes a Minute" from your local Red Cross chapter.
 - If a child is missing, check the pool first. Go to the edge of the pool and scan the entire pool, bottom and surface, as well as the surrounding pool area.

Keeping Children Safe In, On and Around the Water

- Maintain constant supervision. Watch children around any water environment (pool, stream, lake, tub, toilet, bucket of water), no matter what skills your child has acquired and no matter how shallow the water.
- Don't rely on substitutes. The use of flotation devices and inflatable toys cannot replace parental supervision. Such devices could suddenly shift position, lose air, or slip out from underneath, leaving the child in a dangerous situation.
- Enroll children in a water safety course or Learn to Swim program. Your decision to provide your child with an early aquatic experience is a gift that will have infinite rewards. These courses encourage safe practices. You can also purchase a Community Water Safety manual at your local Red Cross.
- Parents should take a CPR course. Knowing these skills can be important around the water and you will expand your capabilities in providing care for your child. You can contact your local Red Cross to enroll in a CPR for Infants and Child course.
- Learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim--this includes adults and children. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. To enroll in swim course, contact your local Red Cross chapter.

- Select a supervised area. A trained lifeguard who can help in an emergency is the best safety factor. Even good swimmers can have an unexpected medical emergency in the water. Never swim alone.
- Select an area that is clean and well maintained. A clean bathhouse, clean restrooms, and a litter-free environment show the management's concern for your health and safety.
- Select an area that has good water quality and safe natural conditions. Murky water, hidden underwater objects, unexpected drop-offs, and aquatic plant life are hazards. Water pollution can cause health problems for swimmers. Strong tides, big waves, and currents can turn an event that began as fun into a tragedy.
- Make sure the water is deep enough before entering headfirst. Too many swimmers are seriously injured every year by entering headfirst into water that is too shallow. A feetfirst entry is much safer than diving.
- Be sure rafts and docks are in good condition. A well-run open-water facility maintains its rafts and docks in good condition, with no loose boards or exposed nails. Never swim under a raft or dock. Always look before jumping off a dock or raft to be sure no one is in the way.
- Avoid drainage ditches and arroyos. Drainage ditches and arroyos for water runoff are not good places for swimming or playing in the water. After heavy rains, they can quickly change into raging rivers that can easily take a human life. Even the strongest swimmers are no match for the power of the water. Fast water and debris in the current make ditches and arroyos very dangerous.

Ocean Safety

- Learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim--this includes adults and children. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. Contact your local Red Cross chapter for information on courses.
- Stay within the designated swimming area, ideally within the visibility of a lifeguard.
- Never swim alone.
- Check the surf conditions before you enter the water. Check to see if a warning flag is up or check with a lifeguard for water conditions, beach conditions, or any potential hazards.
- Stay away from piers, pilings, and diving platforms when in the water.
- Keep a lookout for aquatic life. Water plants and animals may be dangerous. Avoid patches of plants. Leave animals alone.
- Make sure you always have enough energy to swim back to shore.
- Don't try to swim against a current if caught in one. Swim gradually out of the current, by swimming across it.

Personal Watercraft (Jet Skis)

- Learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim. This includes anyone participating in any water sport or

boating activity. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. To enroll in a swim course, contact your local Red Cross chapter.

- Know your local laws and regulations. Some states have special laws governing the use of personal water craft (PWC) which address operations, registration and licensing requirements, education, required safety equipment and minimum ages.
- Operate your PWC with courtesy and common sense. Follow the traffic pattern of the waterway. Obey no-wake and speed zones.
- Use extreme caution around swimmers and surfers. Run your PWC at a slow speed until the craft is away from shore, swimming areas, and docks. Avoid passing close to other boats and jumping wakes. This behavior is dangerous and often illegal.
- Coast Guard-approved life jackets should be worn by the operator of the PWC as well as any riders.
- Ride with a buddy. PWCs should always travel in groups of two or three. You never know when an emergency might occur.
- Alcohol and operating a PWC doesn't mix. Alcohol impairs your judgment, balance, and coordination. For the same reasons it is dangerous to operate an automobile, people should not operate a boat or PWC while drinking alcohol.

Sailboarding and Windsurfing

- Always wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket.
- Wear a wet suit in cold water to prevent hypothermia.
- You need good physical strength and swimming ability. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. To enroll in a swim course, contact your local Red Cross chapter.
- Take windsurfing lessons from a qualified instructor.
- Know local weather conditions. Make sure the water and weather conditions are safe. Because water conducts electricity, it is wise to stop swimming, boating or any activities on the water as soon as you see or hear a storm. Also, heavy rains can make certain areas dangerous.

Surfing

- Take lessons from an experienced individual.
- Wear a wet suit when in cold water.
- Never surf alone.
- Learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim. This includes anyone participating in any water sport. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. To enroll in a swim course, contact your local Red Cross chapter.
- Know local weather conditions. Make sure the water and weather conditions are safe. Because water conducts electricity, it is wise to stop swimming, boating or any activities on the water as soon as you see or hear a storm. Also, heavy rains can make certain areas dangerous.

Water Parks

- Learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim--this includes adults and children. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. To enroll in a swim course, contact your local Red Cross chapter.
- Be sure the area is well supervised by lifeguards before you or others in your group enter the water.
- Read all posted signs. Follow the rules and directions given by lifeguards. Ask questions if you are not sure about a correct procedure.
- When you go from one attraction to another, note that the water depth may be different and that the attraction should be used in a different way.
- Before you start down a water slide, get in the correct position -- face up and feet first.
- Some facilities provide life jackets at no charge. If you cannot swim, wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket. Check others in your group as well.

Hiking and Camping Safety

Hiking and camping provide exercise and interest for people of any age. Just getting out and walking around is a wonderful way to see nature. Since unexpected things happen, however, the best way to help guarantee a good time for all is to plan ahead carefully and follow commonsense safety precautions.

- If you have any medical conditions, discuss your plans with your health care provider and get approval before departing.
- Review the equipment, supplies and skills that you'll need. Consider what emergencies could arise and how you would deal with those situations. What if you got lost, or were unexpectedly confronted by an animal? What if someone became ill or injured? What kind of weather might you encounter? Add to your hiking checklist the supplies you would need to deal with these situations.
- Make sure you have the skills you need for your camping or hiking adventure. You may need to know how to read a compass, erect a temporary shelter or give first aid. Practice your skills in advance.
- If your trip will be strenuous, get into good physical condition before setting out. If you plan to climb or travel to high altitudes, make plans for proper acclimatization to the altitude.
- It's safest to hike or camp with at least one companion. If you'll be entering a remote area, your group should have a minimum of four people; this way, if one is hurt, another can stay with the victim while two go for help. If you'll be going into an area that is unfamiliar to you, take along someone who knows the area or at least speak with those who do before you set out.
- Some areas require you to have reservations or certain permits. If an area is closed, do not go there. Find out in advance about any regulations--there may be rules about campfires or guidelines about wildlife.

- Pack emergency signaling devices, and know ahead of time the location of the nearest telephone or ranger station in case an emergency does occur on your trip.
- Leave a copy of your itinerary with a responsible person. Include such details as the make, year, and license plate of your car, the equipment you're bringing, the weather you've anticipated and when you plan to return.

Get trained in American Red Cross first aid before starting out. Contact your local American Red Cross chapter for a Community First Aid and Safety course.

What To Bring: A Hiking Checklist

What you take will depend on where you are going and how long you plan to be away, but any backpack should include the following:

- Candle and matches
- Cell phone
- Clothing (always bring something warm, extra socks and rain gear)
- Compass
- First aid kit
- Food (bring extra)
- Flashlight
- Foil (to use as a cup or signaling device)
- Hat
- Insect repellent
- Map
- Nylon filament
- Pocket knife
- Pocket mirror (to use as a signaling device)
- Prescription glasses (an extra pair)
- Prescription medications for ongoing medical conditions
- Radio with batteries
- Space blanket or a piece of plastic (to use for warmth or shelter)
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Trash bag (makes an adequate poncho)
- Water
- Waterproof matches or matches in a waterproof tin
- Water purification tablets
- Whistle (to scare off animals or to use as a signaling device)

Always allow for bad weather and for the possibility that you may be forced to spend a night outdoors unexpectedly.

It's a good idea to assemble a separate "survival pack" for each hiker to have at all times. In a small waterproof container, place a pocket knife, compass, whistle, space blanket, nylon filament, water purification tablets, matches and candle. With these items, the chances of being able to survive in the wild are greatly improved.

Picnic Tips

- **Beware of Insect Stings:** If you have known allergies to insect stings, be sure to carry your insect sting kit. Avoid wearing clothing with floral patterns that may attract insects. If you are stung, use a credit card to sweep away the stinger.
- **Ticks:** If you find a tick, remove it by pulling steadily and firmly. Grasp the tick with fine-tipped tweezers, as close to the skin as possible, and pull slowly. Wash area and apply antiseptic or antibiotic ointment. Watch area for infection. See a physician if you see signs of a rash in that area.
- **Keep cold foods cold** -- especially dairy foods should be kept cold to avoid food poisoning. Also do not store perishable foods in the car where temperatures are usually hotter than outside the car.
- **Grills** -- Keep children away from grills and lighter fluid. If someone is burned, follow these first aid steps:
 1. **Stop the burning** by putting out the flames or removing the victim from the source of the burn.
 2. **Cool the burn.** Apply large amounts of cold water (not ice) immediately.
 3. **Cover the burn** loosely using dry, sterile dressings or a clean cloth.
 4. **Call 9-1-1** or your local emergency number.