



**HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

*Public Health*

207 A. South Street, Bishop CA 93514  
TEL: (760) 873-7868 FAX: (760) 873-7800

MARILYN MANN, DIRECTOR  
mmann@inyocounty.us

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**Sunshine has arrived in Inyo County!**

*Inyo County Health and Human Services staff*

Keep in mind these safety tips for you and your family while you are out having fun in the sun.

**Hydration-** As the temperature outside rises, drinking plenty of water is always important and can help prevent dehydration. To stay hydrated, follow the rule of 8x8: eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day. Be aware that you should drink more water when you are out in the sun. Remember to bring clean water with you on trips. Stream or lake water may look clean, but it can contain parasites that cause illness, such as Giardia. If you are traveling into the backcountry there are many options for preparing clean water if you cannot pack it in, such as carrying a water filtration pump, boiling the water, or treating the water with iodine tablets.

**Water play-** Lakes, rivers, streams, and hot springs are pleasant places to explore, but remember that safety precautions are needed when around water. Run-off rates will be high this year, and staying out of rivers and streams is the best policy. Strong currents and debris pose a significant risk to swimmers and floaters in our faster water ways, so officials are recommending that you enjoy calmer waterways this spring and summer. When near rivers and streams, maintain a safe distance and keep children away from the water. Keep children in your line of sight at all times. Use properly fitted life vests and floatation devices when visiting lakes, ponds, or swimming holes. Life vests save lives.

Keep your head above water when swimming or soaking in lakes, rivers, streams, and hot springs. *Naegleria fowleri* (AKA Brain Eating Ameba) is known to enter the body when untreated water enters the nose. Although extremely rare, 8 cases having been reported in a 55 year span in California (1967-2017). Since *N. fowleri* occurs naturally

in the soil and untreated bodies of water and cannot be reliably tested for, it is better to err on the side of caution by keeping your head above water, especially in warm bodies of water like hot springs and the shallows of fresh water lakes that heat up in the sun. For more information about *N. fowleri* visit [https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/naegleria/pdf/naegleria\\_factsheet508c.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/naegleria/pdf/naegleria_factsheet508c.pdf).

**Insects-** Some insects are known to carry illnesses, such as West Nile virus in mosquitoes and Lyme disease carried by ticks. Others may cause allergic reactions, such as bees. Using insect repellent, carrying an EpiPen when someone in the group has a known anaphylactic response to insect bites, and assessing you and your children for bites or ticks after a day out in the wilderness are important steps to take.

When using bug repellent:

- Use and follow the label of an EPA-registered insect repellent that includes one of the following active ingredients: DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE), Para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone. EPA-registered insect repellents are proven to be safe and effective, even for pregnant and breastfeeding women when used as directed.
- Do not use insect repellent on babies younger than 2 months old. Instead, dress them in clothing that covers their arms and leg and use covers over strollers and baby carriers.
- Adults should spray insect repellent onto their hands and rub onto child's face. Don't apply repellent to child's hands, eyes, mouth or irritated skin.
- Wear Long-sleeved shirts and long pants for additional protection.

**Sun-** The sun feels great after our long winter. Remember to use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher to prevent painful burns and protect against skin cancer. Don't forget to reapply sunscreen if you are out in the sun for more than two hours or if you swim, sweat, or towel off. For babies younger than 6 months old, or if you are using sunscreen for the first time on an infant, consult your pediatrician about baby-safe sun screen application.

In addition to sunscreen, there are other steps you can take to protect yourself from damaging UV exposure. Wear a hat that shades your face, neck and ears. Clothing helps to protect your skin, but typical t-shirts have an SPF lower than 15, so consider purchasing clothing that offers higher UV protection or wear sunscreen as well. Don't forget about your eyes! Sunglasses help protect your eyes from UV rays, reduce the risk of cataracts and protect sensitive skin around your eyes.

We know that this time of year is about going out in the sun and enjoying time with our loved ones. Let's make this sunshine season fun by using these easy tips to help stay safe, happy and healthy.