



THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH REMINDS FLORIDIANS TO CELEBRATE JULY 4TH SAFELY

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Tallahassee, Fla.— Today, Florida Department of Health encourages residents and visitors to enjoy a safe Independence Day weekend.

Independence Day is one of the most anticipated holidays on the calendar. Whether you choose to celebrate by enjoying a relaxing day at the beach, a picnic at the park, or watching fireworks, it is important to enjoy the holiday safely.

Follow these tips for a healthy holiday weekend.

Heat and Sun Safety

- Know the signs of heat-related illness, which can include headaches, dizziness, weakness, lightheadedness, irritability, confusion, an upset stomach, or vomiting. Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke – the most serious form of heat injury.
- Seek shade and air conditioning during the hottest parts of the day, usually between 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- Drink plenty of water. Dehydration can be a major threat due to Florida's summer heat.
- Wear a sunscreen that is at a level 30 SPF to protect yourself from harmful ultraviolet rays. Be sure to reapply sunscreen often.
- Never leave children, vulnerable individuals, or pets unattended in a vehicle.

Water Safety

- Never leave a child alone around water, including pools and open bodies of water, to prevent drownings.
- Open cuts or wounds should not be immersed in water; if there's bacteria in the water, it can enter the body through a cut or wound.
- If a cut or wound happens when in the water, it should be washed with clean, running water and soap and covered with a clean, dry waterproof bandage.
- When swimming at the beach, stay alert to and obey the current safety flags:

- **Double Red Flag:** Very high hazard and water is closed to the public.
- **Single Red Flag:** High hazard with high surf and strong currents.
- **Single Yellow Flag:** Medium hazard with moderate surf and/or strong currents.
- **Single Green Flag:** Low hazard with calm conditions, but caution is still advised.
- **Single Purple Flag:** Stinging marine life.



Have a phone nearby in case you need to call 911 in an emergency.

Firework Safety

Fireworks are part of the American tradition. Prevent severe injuries by taking precautions when handling fireworks.

- Never allow young children to handle fireworks.
- Never use fireworks while impaired by drugs or alcohol.
- Anyone using fireworks or standing nearby should wear protective eyewear.
- Never hold lighted fireworks in your hands.
- Never light fireworks indoors.
- Keep fireworks away from people, houses, and flammable material. Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks.
- Soak both spent and unused fireworks in water for a few hours before discarding.
- Keep a bucket of water or hose nearby to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off or in case of fire.

Malaria and Mosquito-Borne Illness Prevention

Summer is prime time for Florida's mosquitoes, and there is currently a statewide advisory for mosquito-borne illnesses following locally acquired cases of malaria in Sarasota County. This holiday weekend, protect yourself by **applying bug spray, wearing long sleeve shirts and pants, and avoiding areas with high mosquito populations.** You can find more mosquito prevention tips [here](#).

Food Safety

- Before and after handling raw meat, poultry, eggs, and seafood, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Separate raw food to prevent cross contamination. Use one cutting board for raw meat, poultry, and seafood and another cutting board for vegetables and fruits.
- Prevent foodborne illness by keeping hot foods above 140 degrees Fahrenheit after cooking. Use ice or cold packs in insulated coolers to keep cold items at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or cooler.
- Make sure to refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours. If the temperature is above 90 degrees Fahrenheit, chill food within 1 hour.

About the Florida Department of Health

The Florida Department of Health, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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