



Have a Safe July 4th!

Summer is here! After what always seems to be the longest winter in recorded history, summer is finally upon us. With the summer months come new and exciting activities for all ages; swimming at one of the local county beaches, backyard barbecues, local events and festivals, vacations and fireworks just to name a few.

All summer fun requires a certain degree of safety and the Berrien County Health Department would like to offer these tips so that all citizens can enjoy this time of year.

Alcohol and Summer Fun:

As we congregate with friends and family to enjoy all that Berrien County has to offer, alcohol may be on your menu. One thing to remember is that alcohol and water really don't mix. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that alcohol use is involved in up to half of adolescent and adult deaths associated with water recreation and about one in five reported boating fatalities. Boater's have a saying "one in the water is like two on land" referring to alcoholic beverages. Drinking and boating can be a dangerous combination, just like automobile drivers, boaters have a responsibility to their passengers and other boaters to be safe and sober while driving their boats. Designate a captain before you consume alcohol.

Alcohol lowers a person's inhibitions and decreases their ability to make good decisions. Swimming while intoxicated is extremely dangerous, especially

at night. Alcohol decreases the motor skills necessary to maneuver in water and navigate currents. If you drink don't swim.

If alcohol and water don't mix, then alcohol and fire REALLY don't. The Fourth of July means barbecues, time with friends and family, and fireworks. Remember that fireworks are basically explosives and while manufacturers do the best they can to make them as safe as possible there is a lot to be said for operator error. Mixing alcohol and fireworks can lead to unnecessary risk taking and injury. Make sure your designated igniter could double as your sober driver. Ask any firefighter, emergency room or burn unit professional and they'll tell you the dangers of fireworks. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA); in 2006, 9,200 fireworks-related injuries were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms. (not including minor injuries that did not need medical attention).

Drinking and driving never mix. To avoid injury, jail time



and fines think before you drink, and designate a driver.

Children and Summer Fun:

The CDC Reports that more than one in four fatal drowning victims are children 14 and younger. For every child who dies from drowning, another four received emergency department care for nonfatal submersion injuries. It is very important that parents and guardians keep a watchful eye over their children when they are around water.

Children must also be monitored around fireworks. Remember fireworks are explosives with the potential to do great harm when not treated with respect and safety. The NFPA tells us that the risk of fireworks injury is two-and-a-half times as high for children ages 10-14 as for the general population.

Of the more than 4,000 fireworks-related injuries to children under 14 each year, the majority occur in the month surrounding the Fourth of July, with older kids (typically 10- to 14-year-olds) suffering the most injuries. Sparklers (often considered the safest fireworks), rockets and firecrackers are responsible for the bulk of fireworks-related injuries.

We at the Health Department want all Berrien County and Michigan Residents to have a great time this summer and with a few well placed intentions you and your family can enjoy a safe and accident free summer vacation!

Berrien County Health

Department:
Preventing Disease,
Prolonging Life and
Protecting the
Health of the
Community.



Bats, Bugs, and Bacteria

In July, the Health Department will focus on Bats, Bugs, and Bacteria (and some other things we will all encounter being outdoors in this hot summer month). Foodborne Illness Outbreaks, 4th of July Safety, Rabies, Lyme Disease, and Youth Fair will be highlighted this month. For questions about any of these topics, please call the health department at **926-7121**.

Fireworks safety tips

- Only adults should handle fireworks. Tell children that they should leave the area immediately and inform an adult if their friends are using fireworks.
- Discuss safety procedures with your children. Teach children to stop, drop and roll if their clothes catch fire. Make sure they know how to call 9-1-1. Show them how to put out fireworks with water or a fire extinguisher.
- Read labels and carefully follow directions. All fireworks must carry warning labels describing necessary safety precautions. Following the directions greatly minimizes the risk of injury.
- Never use fireworks indoors.
- Be sure spectators are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Never aim or throw fireworks at another person.
- Never place your face or any other body part over fireworks.
- Never try to reignite fireworks that malfunction.
- Never carry fireworks in your pocket.
- Light fireworks only on smooth, flat surfaces, away from houses, dry leaves and other flammable materials.

For more information, call the health department at

926-7121

The Berrien County Health Department has five locations to serve you:

Benton Harbor		Niles		Three Oaks
769 Pipestone	M-139 Office	School Based	1205 N. Front St.	21 N. Elm
P.O. Box 706	2106 S. M-139	870 Colfax Ave	684-2800	756-2008
926-7121	927-5623	925-4500		

Or visit us on the web at www.berriencohlthdept.org

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