



## **St. Lawrence County Public Health Department**

80 State Highway 310, Suite 2 ■ Canton, New York 13617-1476

Phone: (315) 386-2325 ■ Fax: (315) 386-2203

### **Press Release**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Stay Safe This Summer: Public Health Reminders from St. Lawrence County Public Health Department**

**Canton, NY** — St. Lawrence County Public Health Department reminds community members that as they gather on summer days, they should follow useful safety precautions to ensure the day is safe and enjoyable. Those tips include extreme heat, safe food preparation, water safety, avoiding tick and mosquito bites, rabies control program, and limiting sun exposure.

#### **Extreme Heat**

When temperatures are extremely high, take steps to protect yourself and your loved ones:

- Stay in an air-conditioned indoor location as much as you can.
- Drink plenty of fluids even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Schedule outdoor activities carefully.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing and sunscreen.
- Pace yourself.
- Take cool showers or baths to cool down.
- Check on a friend or neighbor and have someone do the same for you.
- Never leave children or pets in cars.
- Check the local news for health and safety updates.

St. Lawrence County offers several cooling centers where you can go to cool off during extreme heat. Just make sure to call before you go! The cooling centers may be closed at certain times or only be available during extreme heat events. Check out our website for a listing of cooling centers: <https://www.stlawco.gov/Departments/PublicHealth/CoolingCenters>

A list is also available on the NYSDOH's website:

[https://apps.health.ny.gov/statistics/environmental/public\\_health\\_tracking/tracker/#/CCMap](https://apps.health.ny.gov/statistics/environmental/public_health_tracking/tracker/#/CCMap)

#### **Mosquitoes and Ticks**

To reduce the risk of being bitten by ticks and mosquitoes, it is important to take the following precautions. Blacklegged (deer) ticks can carry the bacteria that cause Lyme disease, the most commonly reported tick-borne illness in New York, along with other diseases. Mosquito bites can also lead to infections such as the West Nile virus.

When hiking, working, or spending time outdoors in wooded or grassy areas, follow these guidelines:



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
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- **Wear Proper Clothing:** Choose long pants and long-sleeved shirts to minimize skin exposure.
- **Use Insect Repellent:** Apply insect repellents that contain DEET, Picaridin, or other effective ingredients, and make sure to follow the instructions on the label.
- **Manage Hair:** Keep long hair tied back, especially while gardening, to prevent ticks from getting caught in it.
- **Check for Ticks Regularly:** While outdoors, check yourself frequently for ticks and brush them away before they attach themselves.
- **Conduct Full Body Checks:** Perform thorough body checks multiple times throughout the day, as well as at the end of the day, to ensure that no ticks have attached to your skin.
- **Dry Clothing Thoroughly:** After coming indoors, tumble dry any clothes on high heat for 10 minutes to eliminate ticks. If the clothes are damp, you may need to dry them for a longer duration.
- **Shower After Outdoor Activities:** Showering soon after being outdoors can help wash away unattached ticks and provide a good opportunity to conduct a tick check.
- **Control Mosquitoes:** Take steps to manage mosquito populations by installing screens on windows and doors. Additionally, empty, scrub, and turn over outdoor items that may collect water—such as buckets, planters, pools, and birdbaths—at least once a week to prevent mosquito breeding.

By following these precautions, you can help protect yourself from tick and mosquito bites and the diseases they may transmit.

### **Rabies Prevention**

Keep your pets and your family safe by ensuring all dogs, cats, and ferrets are up-to-date on rabies vaccinations.

- Avoid unfamiliar or wild animals
- Never touch sick or injured wildlife.
- Store garbage in secure containers and avoid leaving pet food outside, as these can attract wild animals.

### **Sun Safety**

SLCPHD advises everyone to follow sun safety guidelines to reduce the risk of skin cancer.

Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher, applying it to dry skin at least 15 minutes before going outdoors and after swimming or sweating.

For optimal protection, wear long-sleeved shirts, pants, and a wide-brimmed hat. If wearing a baseball cap or short sleeves, apply sunscreen to your ears, neck, and arms. Remember, UV rays can still harm you on cloudy days.



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### **Food Preparation**

When preparing food, always wash your hands before cooking and in between handling different foods to avoid cross-contamination. Thaw frozen beef, poultry, or fish safely in the refrigerator, cold water, or a microwave oven. Cook immediately after thawing. Ideally, a meat thermometer should be used to check the inner temperature of these foods by inserting it into the thickest part of the meat:

- Chicken - 165°F
- Hamburger - 160°F
- Pork - 150°F
- Hot dogs - 140°F
- Leftovers - 165°F
- Eggs - 145°F
- Other foods - 140°F

For more summer safety resources, visit the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department website: [www.stlawco.gov/Departments/PublicHealth](http://www.stlawco.gov/Departments/PublicHealth)

Stay safe, stay cool, and enjoy your summer responsibly!

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