

Beach Safety

1. 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 2:00 p.m. and wear a sunscreen with a sun protection factor containing a high rating such as 15.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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. .
5. Wear foot protection: Many times, people's feet can get burned from the sand or cut from glass in the sand.
6. Spinal Injury Prevention
 - Don't dive headfirst into any unknown water. Remember, the beach ocean floor may change its shape constantly.
 - In shallow water, don't dive headfirst towards the bottom into oncoming waves.
 - In shallow water, don't stand with your back to the waves.
 - Don't jump or dive from a cliff, pier, jetty or bridge.
7. Avoid bodysurfing, bodyboarding or surfing straight "over the falls." Ride the shoulder.
8. During a bodyboard or surfing "wipe out," try to hands out in front of you. Don't dive straight to the bottom.
9. While bodysurfing, always keep at least one arm out in front of you to protect your head and neck.
10. Don't swim near piers or breakwaters. The currents here may be very strong, even for the best of swimmers.
11. Stay clear of boats. They take time to change direction, and they may not even see you.
12. Swim parallel to the shore. If you swim out too far, you may be too tired to swim back.
13. Open water is usually much colder than a pool, so don't swim out too far.

