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Practicing in Boca Raton and the Surrounding Community Since 1979

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Since When is Eating a Hot Dog a Sport?

I grew up in the Brighton Beach Coney Island area in the 1950s through the early 1970's. The beach season began Memorial Day with lifeguards guarding the beach until Labor Day. Millions trekked to the beaches via subway and bus in those pre air conditioning days to cool off. The "season" ended Labor Day with a Mardi Gras parade. New Yorkers flocked to the beaches, boardwalk, multiple amusement parks (Steeplechase, Adventureland, Luna Park, etc.) a midway carnival and attractions such as the Wonder Wheel, the Parachute Jump and roller coasters like the Thunderbolt and classic Cyclone. If there was a food center at one of these venues, it was Nathan's owned by the local Handwerker family. Its selections ran from seafood, a raw bar, delicatessen, hot dogs, hamburgers, pizza and desserts. The line at the hot dog counter was rarely less than a dozen people deep. There was no hot dog eating contest in those days and no need for it.

In the 1960s New Yorkers moved to the suburbs while Coney Island became a haven for low-income housing thanks to Robert Moses and Fred Trump. It became one of the least publicized crime and drug ridden ghettos in the northeast. Nathan's survived by opening a second-floor dining room for NY uniformed personnel and their families. Members of the police and fire departments were rumored to get their meals for free. The decaying amusement areas catered to busloads of minority families and their church groups on Fridays and Saturdays. There were so many cops and firemen, police cars and fire trucks that in the midst of a crime ridden community Nathan's remained a safe place to stop for a meal. That special attention to uniformed NY personnel became part of the scandal ridden Serpico trial of that era. Despite no hot dog eating contest, Nathan's persisted enough to open a branch in Nassau County - Oceanside to cater to its former clientele now living in the suburbs.

The hot dog eating contest began in 1967. It was an untimely, poorly publicized event. I know because I worked there part-time in the catering department while attending Brooklyn College. The Handwerker family sold Nathan's to private investors in 1984 after founder Nathan's death.

ESPN in 2003, looking for a time filler on a slow national holiday, on July 4th, began televising the hot dog eating contest. Major League Baseball didn't begin until later in the day and football was weeks away, so ESPN created the 10-minute Nathan's Hot Dog eating contest.

Eating hot dogs is not a sport. Even if you train to eat large volumes over a 10-minute period you are not an athlete. Jalen Brunson, Lionel Messi, Angel Reese, Caitlin Clark and Trinidad Rodman are athletes. Joey Chestnut is not an athlete.

Eating a grilled hot dog with mustard and sauerkraut is not a sport. It's a delicacy!

Don't Let the Heat Beat You Up!

As the temperatures rise and humidity climbs the likelihood of heat related illness and death increase. Our bodies generate heat as our muscles perform their work. When the temperature rises and the humidity increases, we sweat more. As that sweat evaporates, we cool down. When the air is full of moisture and the sweat cannot evaporate our cooling mechanism is far less efficient. Many of the medications we take on a daily

basis for chronic conditions impair our ability to dissipate heat so the chance of a heat related illness in the elderly and chronically ill is much higher. For these reasons we make common sense recommendations to avoid heat illnesses.

- 1 If you must be outside, try to do your work before 10AM or after 4PM
- 2 Work in the shade if you can.
- 3 Wear a wide brimmed hat.
- 4 Your clothing should be loose, baggy and light colored.
- 5 Hydrate well before going outside and please drink a glass of cool water or nonalcoholic beverage every half an hour.
- 6 Apply sunscreen to protect yourself from sunburn.

If you or a loved one feel lightheaded, dizzy, weak and/or nauseated while working outside, it's important to stop and be taken to a cooler area immediately. If air conditioning is unavailable get into the shade and under a fan. A cool shower or bath, a dip in a cool pool or lake or an ice bath is a fast way to lower body temperature. If those are not available, then placing ice under the arms, in the groin and on the body should be tried. Hydrate, hydrate hydrate. Cool water and Gatorade are my favorites.

If nausea is an issue, chop up ice cubes into ice chips and let the patient suck on a teaspoonful of ice chips which will melt in the mouth and enter the stomach in a small quantity limiting the chance of it being regurgitated or thrown up. When in doubt about the patient having adequate blood pressure or being confused call 911 immediately while you try and lower the core body temperature.

Heat kills. With daily heat advisories and the heat index greater than 100 degrees most days, we must take precautions. The same applies to our pets, especially dogs. Before you walk your dog or cat reach down and touch the sidewalk. If its too hot for your hands its too hot for their paws. Stay in the shade or on the grass.

Outdoor summer activities are fun. Just take the proper precautions to protect yourself from the heat, the sun and pests potentially carrying disease.

Summer Means More Time Outdoors: Bug Spray and Sunscreen

With more hours of sunlight, we are spending more time outdoors now. It's fun to be outdoors but with the joy of fun and adventure comes more exposure to insects and insect borne diseases. Mosquitos transmit more than an itchy bite. They carry diseases such as West Nile Virus with potential encephalitis. In the southern US we have dengue fever, Chikengunya bone crushing fever and even malaria has been diagnosed in Sarasota. Yellow fever has been seen in the southwest and Central America. Even if the flying bugs are not carrying some dreaded disease their bites are uncomfortable and annoying.

Each year *Consumer Reports* reviews and rates the best bug repellents. Each year they find volunteers who will stick their arms in small tubes filled with hungry mosquitoes after spraying their arm with a test product. Their results show that the best products contain at least 30% DEET or Picardin. Deep Woods Off spray and wipes seemed to be a clear winner. For those of us looking for a more natural product, Lemon Oil Eucalyptus by Repel was a superior non-DEET or Picardi Product. I have used Repel for years successfully not wanting to expose my puppies to DEET. It works well but the distinct smell is not for everyone.

One other challenge to being outdoors is sun exposure, sunburn and protection against skin cancers. *Consumer Reports* tests and rates sun protection products. They suggest products with an SPF of 35 or greater that can withstand 40- 80 minutes in the water. They recommend reapplication of sunscreen after swimming even if using a waterproof product and every few hours.

SPF refers to how long your exposure to sun must be to burn. If it's 10 minutes normally, and you apply SPF 50, you will theoretically get 500 minutes of exposure before burning.

Sunscreens come in chemical protection and or mechanical barrier protection. The barrier sunscreens like zinc oxide don't test as well as the chemical products and are not *Consumer Reports* recommended. Sunscreens mostly screen out the UVB rays highest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. The UVA rays are present all day long and they are the ones most responsible for aging your skin with sun exposure.

Consumer Reports suggests the following lotions:

- Copper tone Water Babies SPF 50
- LaRoche Pisa's Antiolios
- Kids lotion SPF 50
- Supergoop Play Everyday SPF 50

For sprays, they suggest the following:

- Eucerin Advanced Hydration SPF 50 sunscreen spray
- Black Girl Sunscreen Spray SPF 50
- Neutrogena Beach Defense SPF 50

Sunscreen expires so check the date on your product before applying. Be sure to shake the product and apply it liberally.

Summer Exploring Means Tick Exposure

I received an email from a patient who was appropriately upset that her husband found a tick attached to her scalp. They had been travelling and she was not sure when it was attached.

Photographs were taken of the tick embedded in her scalp and then several of the engorged tick after it was removed. The patient asked if she needed to be on antibiotics. The long and short answer is that if the tick has been attached for less than five days, and you have no symptoms, in most cases you do not need antibiotics. Research indicates prophylaxis with antibiotics after a tick bite with no symptoms does not work! In this situation it was helpful to learn the location of their travels and look up the types of ticks present in that location and what diseases they caused.

Climate change has resulted in an expansion of the regions where certain ticks are located in. The patient and her husband traveled to a deep southern state which has few reported cases of Lyme Disease. However, Ehrlichiosis and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever do occur there.

As a physician, I advise spraying yourself with appropriate insecticide containing DEET or picaridin before your walk to prevent tick bites. Wear long pants tucked into your boots or shoes and stay on paths rather than strolling through long high grass. Homeowners should mow their lawns frequently keeping the grass level low and create a tick free area for outdoor enjoyment. The low-cut grass area should be sprayed against ticks and pests and be surrounded by a wood barrier with a three-foot zone between the wood and the grass.

If you are bitten by a tick, remove it, photograph the tick, and save it. Wash the wound well with soap and water. If symptoms develop such as fever, chills, aches and pains or rashes, see a physician immediately.

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