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Lawn and Garden Safety Tips - CPSC Urges Care with Springtime Chores

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The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is urging people to use caution and common sense when tending to their lawns and gardens this spring. CPSC data show that each year about 400,000 people are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries from lawn and garden tools.



"CPSC's job is to make sure that the lawn and garden tools are safe," said CPSC Chairman Ann Brown. "When they're not, we work with manufacturers to set safety standards and get defective products out of people's homes."

"Consumers must do their part to care for their own safety. They need to always use lawn and garden tools responsibly and follow manufacturers' instructions."

Each year, about 25,300 people are injured and 75 people are killed on or near riding lawnmowers and garden tractors. One out of every five deaths involves a child. CPSC estimates that most of the deaths to children occurred when a child was in the path of a moving mower.

Other garden equipment can be dangerous even when it is not in use. For example, weed and hedge-trimming equipment has sharp blades that can cut if the blades are mishandled.

CPSC recommends that consumers take the following precautions to prevent injuries from lawn and garden equipment:

-- Dress appropriately for the task. Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts (to avoid injuries from thrown objects like rocks or sticks), close-fitting clothes and no jewelry (to avoid getting anything caught in moving parts), sturdy shoes with slip-resistant rubber soles, eye protection, heavy gloves (protects hands when changing, sharpening, or cleaning blades), and hearing protection such as ear

plugs when using motor-driven equipment.

-- Before starting up machinery, remove objects from the area in which you are working that can cause injury or damage equipment, such as sticks, glass, metal, wire, and stones.

-- Make sure that safety devices on the equipment are in place and functioning properly before starting work.

-- Never let a child ride or operate a garden tractor or riding mower, even if the child is supervised. Teenagers should only be allowed to operate outdoor power equipment if they possess adequate strength and maturity to do so safely. They also should be supervised by a responsible adult.

-- Keep children indoors and supervised at all times when any outdoor power equipment is being used. Young children move quickly and are attracted to mowers and mowing activity, especially if they have been given rides on mowers before.

-- Never assume children will remain where you last saw them. Be alert and turn off the mower if children enter the mowing area. Use extra care when backing up or when approaching corners, shrubs, and trees.

-- Unplug electric tools and disconnect spark plug wires on gasoline-powered tools before making adjustments or clearing jams near moving parts.

-- Be sure power tools are turned off and made inoperable if they must be left unattended to prevent use by children.

-- Handle gas carefully. Never fill gasoline tanks while machinery is on or when equipment is still hot. Wipe up spills. Store gas in an approved container away from the house. Finally, never smoke or use any type of flame around gasoline or any gasoline-powered equipment.

-- Never work with electric power tools in wet or damp conditions. For protection against electrocution, use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). GFCIs come in several models, including a portable plug-in type.

-- Be sure that extension cords are in good condition, are rated for outdoor use, and are the proper gauge for the electrical current capacity of the tool.

Sun Safety Tips for Your Skin



Many people love the warm sun. The sun's rays make us feel good, and in the short term, make us look good. But our love affair isn't a two way street: Exposure to sun causes many of the [wrinkles](#) and age spots on our faces and is the number one cause of [skin cancer](#).

In fact, sun exposure causes many of the [skin](#) changes that we think of as a normal part of aging. Over time, the sun's ultraviolet (UV) light damages the fibers in the skin called elastin. When these fibers break down, the skin begins to sag, stretch, and lose its ability to go back into place. The skin also [bruises](#) and tears more easily -- taking longer to heal. So while sun damage to the skin may not be apparent when you're young, it will definitely show later in life.

How Does the Sun Change Skin?

Exposure to the sun causes:

- Pre-cancerous (actinic keratosis) and cancerous (basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma) skin lesions
- Benign tumors
- Fine and coarse wrinkles
- Freckles
- Discolored areas of the skin, called mottled pigmentation
- A yellow discoloration of the skin
- The dilation of small blood vessels under the skin

How Can I Protect Skin From the Sun?

Nothing can completely undo sun damage, although the skin can sometimes repair itself. So, it's never too late to begin protecting yourself from the sun. Follow these tips to help prevent sun-related skin problems:

- Apply sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or greater at least 30 minutes before sun exposure and then every few hours thereafter
- Select cosmetic products and contact lenses that offer UV protection
- Wear sunglasses with total UV protection
- Wear wide-brimmed hats, long sleeved shirts, and pants
- Avoid direct sun exposure as much as possible during peak UV radiation hours between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
- Perform skin self-exams regularly to become familiar with existing growths and to notice any changes or new growths
- Eighty percent of a person's lifetime sun exposure is acquired before age 18. As a parent, be a good role model and foster skin cancer prevention habits in your child
- Avoid tanning beds

TIPS FOR PARENTS ON INSECT BITES AND PREVENTION

From Children's Hospital of Wisconsin

Milwaukee, Wis. (6/30/2005) - Summer means outdoor excitement: baseball games, swimming, camping and all kinds of other fun activities.

However, there is one pesky problem outdoors that parents aren't excited about: bugs. Children's Hospital of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Poison Center urge parents to safely prevent insect bites this summer.

"Insect bites are a frequent skin problem during summer months," said Beth Drolet, medical director of Dermatology at Children's Hospital. "Complications of insects bites are rare, but do occur. Furthermore, certain illnesses, such as West Nile virus and Lyme disease, are transmitted through tick and mosquito bites. The best way to prevent insect bites is through proper use of insect repellent." Drolet also is an associate professor of Pediatrics (Dermatology) at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Choosing the right insect repellent

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends using an insect repellent that contains active ingredients that have been registered with the Environmental Protection Agency. Of the ingredients registered with the EPA, two are the most effective: DEET and picaridin.

DEET is the most effective insect repellent, but often is misunderstood when it comes to its proper use on children. Insect-repellent levels of DEET vary from less than 10 percent to more than 30 percent. However, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the level of DEET in a product doesn't indicate its effectiveness in warding off bugs. Instead, it indicates how long the product will be effective. For example, products with 10 percent DEET will be effective for approximately two hours. A 24 percent level of DEET is effective for an average of five hours.

Picaridin is a relatively new ingredient in insect repellents. It has been used worldwide since 1998, but recently was recommended by the CDC for use in the United States. It currently is available in concentrations of 5 and 10 percent.

The safest way to use insect repellent is to apply it only once a day. If using a product containing DEET, choose the product with the lowest level of DEET concentration for the amount of time that will be spent outdoors. So, parents should determine how long their child will be outside, and then determine the appropriate concentration to apply.

In addition, parents should follow these age guidelines:

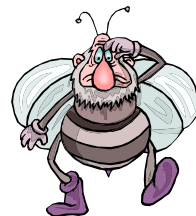
- Children younger than two months never should have any insect repellent applied to their skin.
- Children who are two months or older and younger than one year should have only products with less than 7.5 percent DEET concentrations applied to their skin.
- Children older than one year should use products with 15 percent DEET or less on their skin.

When choosing an insect repellent, parents should avoid aerosol sprays because they increase the chance that the chemicals are inhaled. Instead, choose a lotion or pump spray. Also, do not use products that combine bug spray and sunscreen. Sunscreen should be reapplied frequently, while bug spray should only be applied once a day.

Applying bug spray

Parents should be aware of the safest way to apply insect repellents, and remember these tips:

- Bug spray is safest when applied to a child's clothing, and should be applied only to skin that is exposed. Parents should apply the repellent to their hands first and then apply it to the child's exposed skin.
- Avoid applying the product to children's hands, areas around the eyes, mouth and ears, and irritated skin, cuts or wounds.
- Bug spray should be applied sparingly. Saturation and heavy application is not necessary for the repellent to be effective.
- Wash bug spray off skin and clothing after returning indoors.



Have a safe and Fun Summer