

Don't Let Bites, Burns and Cuts Spoil Your Summer

This summer, keep your family safe, happy and healthy by staying vigilant and taking appropriate action against summer bites, burns and cuts.

Fast Facts:

- Mosquitos transmit several serious diseases, including malaria, dengue, Zika and chikungunya.
- People infected with tetanus may spend weeks in the ICU and frequently require a ventilator.
- Over the past 30 years, more people have had skin cancer than all the other cancers combined.

"Just to be making sure that you're preventing sunburns by wearing sunscreen. It's so important to put sunscreen on, on a daily basis, whether it's a cloudy day or sunny. Put that sunscreen on, protect your skin, save yourself from lots of problems down the road," said Heather Hawkins, R.N., Program Director, OSF HealthCare Wound Care Clinic.

The Wound Center at OSF HealthCare St. Joseph Medical Center offers these tips for staying healthy this summer.

- Remember that sunburns are entirely preventable. With the appropriate shade, clothing and sunscreen, these painful burns don't have to be a part of your summer.
- Though uncomfortable, most bug bites are harmless and can be avoided with proper insect repellent and protective clothing. However, with the presence of an allergy, some insect bites can result in severe reactions. Seek emergency care for insect bites if you are experiencing chest pain, swelling of the face, turning blue, nausea, cramps, vomiting, or are having difficulty swallowing or breathing.
- A minor cut or scrape will typically heal without medical intervention, but deep puncture wounds are at high risk for infection. Puncture wounds made by nails, teeth or knives are more susceptible to tetanus as the infectious bacteria is most commonly found in soil, dust, manure and saliva. Treating even a minor cut immediately could prevent complications in the future.

"It can turn into things like cellulitis that you end up in the hospital for and needing IV antibiotics," said Hawkins. "So anything you can do to prevent that bacteria from entering that wound: making sure that you're keeping it clean and covered so that it has time to heal without that bacteria being introduced is definitely important."

For more information on the treatment of chronic or infected wounds, contact OSF HealthCare St. Joseph Medical Center Wound Care Clinic by calling (309) 661-6230.