

Health Counts



Let Summer Celebrations Begin!

Injury prevention is a concern and priority for Yates County Public Health! Our local Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hospital ER and area health care providers are always busy with patients who have been injured in some fashion; whether it is a vehicular crash, work-related injury, fall injury, water-related injury, recreational injury, sports injury, or accidental poisoning. Most injuries can be prevented by paying close attention to safety measures you can practice. Learn what you can do to help prevent various kinds of injuries from occurring at: http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury_prevention/

On the topic of **injury prevention** – recently legislation was passed by the Yates County Legislature authorizing sale of sparklers in Yates County for 2 time periods around holiday celebrations, 4th of July and New Year’s Eve. While celebrating these occasions, sparklers are often used around children and sometimes handled by them too. Much care is needed to protect children against burns and eye injuries with the handling of sparklers and fireworks. With the chemical compound coatings on the sparkler wires, sparklers can burn at between 1200 and 2000 degrees Fahrenheit. That is as hot as a welder’s torch. Adults should always supervise sparkler use by children and take steps to avoid injuries. To learn more about fireworks and sparkler safety during the month of June - National Safety Month and Fireworks Safety Month, go to: <http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Safety-Education/Safety-Education-Centers/Fireworks/>



On the topic of safety, during the 4th week of June, the nation observes **National Lightning Safety Awareness Week**. When you hear someone say your chances of winning the lottery are as good as getting hit by lightning, take a breath! Winning the lottery would be nice, but getting hit by lightning is real and it happens all too frequently in the U.S., so let’s not even consider those odds.

Actually, lightning strikes the United States about 25 million times a year. Most lightning occurs in the summer, but people can be struck at any time of year. National Weather Service data indicates that lightning kills an average of 49 people each year, and hundreds more are severely injured. That may not be staggering statistics, but it is a real danger and people are injured or killed by this weather phenomenon. There are ways you can protect yourself and others from lightning strikes though:

- Since no place outside is safe during a lightning storm, seek shelter in a substantial building or a metal-topped vehicle with the windows up. Stay inside for ½ hour after the storm has passed. If you hear thunder, lightning is nearby and close enough to strike you still.
- When seeking shelter inside, stay away from corded phones, computers, and other electrical equipment that put you in contact with electricity. Avoid using sinks or baths until the storm has passed and stay away from windows and doors. Avoid lying or leaning on concrete floors and walls.
- If caught outside with no safe shelter, move away from elevated areas. Stay away from isolated trees and do not lie flat on the ground. If you are on a body of water, get off and find shelter.





5 Ways Lightning Strikes People

First and foremost, if lightning strikes a person, the victim is safe for another person to touch because the body does not store electricity; however, the person will need first aid immediately! A bystander should call 9-1-1 for medical attention, and start CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and/or use an AED (automated external defibrillator) if needed and available.

1. Direct strike - most often a person who is struck directly is in an open area. Direct strikes are not as common, but potentially more deadly. With a direct strike, the person becomes part of the main lightning discharge channel. A portion of the current moves along the skin surface (called a flashover) and a portion moves through the body along the cardiovascular and/or nervous systems. Heat from the current can produce burns. The current running through the body is the most dangerous factor though. Immediate medical attention is necessary for survival.
2. Side flash – occurs when a lightning strike hits a taller object nearby and a portion of the current jumps to the victim. This most often occurs when the victim is within 1-2 feet of the taller object. Most of the time this happens when the victim takes shelter under a tree to avoid getting wet. Better wet than struck!
3. Ground current – occurs when lightning strikes a tree or another object and the energy of the current travels outward along the ground. If you are outside anywhere near the object struck, you may become a victim. This strike can cause the most number of deaths because it travels through a larger area. Typically this kind of strike kills the most number of farm animals.
4. Conduction – Lightning can travel a long distance through wires and metal surfaces. Most indoor casualties are affected by this.
5. Streamers – this type is not as common as the others, but people caught in the “streamers” are at risk for death and injury just the same. Streamers develop as the downward movement of the lightning charge approaches the ground. When the main part of the channel discharges, the streamers also discharge in the area.

To learn more about lightning danger, go to: <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/>



*For those people who have enjoyed our annual walking competitions in the past, the time is coming again to lace up those sneakers or get out those good walking shoes and choose your teams. This year the **Choose Health Yates Dundee and Penn Yan walking teams** will be joining a larger group of walkers, those who participate in the **Finger Lakes Health** walking competitions! Since the competitive spirit will be good, we need to get limbered up and ready to start. (Don't forget your water bottle for hydration!) For more details and to register your team, check out: www.flhealth.org/walk-and-talk; click on “join the competition” or call 315-787-4636 or 315-531-2053.*

With summer weather comes heat, humidity and plenty of activity. Our pets love to be with us and do the things that we do, but animals thrive on routine. Along with summer activities come people gathering in groups centered around food and fun activities, with bugs exercising their pestiness and family routines off-schedule. Heat and unusual activity stress animals and can result in tragic incidents when too much of a good thing can occur. Be mindful of your pet's needs. Try to keep feeding times on schedule and make sure there is plenty of fresh water available. Keep pets out of the direct sunlight because overheating can make them anxious. Kids and pets can become tired and grumpy with heat and over-stimulation. Serious dog bites can happen at these times, sending people to the hospital for treatment. Sometimes leaving pets at home alone may be the kindest act for them. Certainly leaving the pet in an over-heated car is never an option! Avoiding injuries and a confinement for your pet is the goal. To better care for your pet, make sure the pet is current on its rabies vaccination and do your best to avoid contact with wildlife that could transmit rabies. Better safe than sorry... And yes, this smiling real pup is named Max, and he gets to join in family fun when the time is right for him!

