



## Press Release

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### Have a fun and happy Fourth of July – just stay safe.

Cook County Department of Public Health Chief Operating Officer, Dr. Terry Mason encourages all residents to stay safe while enjoying this weekend's Fourth of July activities.

“While residents take to the streets to watch Fourth of July parades, the parks to watch fireworks and backyards to feast with loved ones, take some basic precautions to protect you and your family, said Dr. Mason”

#### **Food Safety:**

- Always wash hands thoroughly before preparing food and after handling raw meats. Scrub fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid cross-contaminating foods by keeping each item separate. Wrap foods well.
- Keep food chilled. Stock a cooler with plenty of ice and maintain a temperature of 40 F.
- To ensure bacteria are destroyed, cook hamburgers to an internal temperature of 160 F; hot dogs to 165 F.
- Keep hot food at 140F or above and cold food at 40F or below. Refrigerate leftovers within two hours if indoors, or one hour if outdoors in weather 90F or higher.

#### **Fireworks Safety:**

- The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend a professionally-operated community firework display.
- Warn children about the dangers of playing with fireworks – even sparklers which burn at 2,000 F.

#### **Water Safety:**

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drowning is the leading cause of injury death for children ages one to four, with three children dying every day as a result of drowning.

- Always provide adult supervision while children are in or around water. Maintain gates and fences around residential pools.
- Make sure kids wear life jackets and always keep floatation devices on hand.
- Remember that lifeguards are on duty to respond to emergencies, not to supervise children.

#### **West Nile Virus:**

Protect you and your family this West Nile virus season. Remember - mosquitoes can be sneaky little suckers, so get *them* before they get *you* and follow the 3 R's: Remove, Repel and Repair:

- **Remove** standing water around your home.
  - Empty standing water in pet bowls, flower pots, old tires, bird baths, baby pools and toys where mosquitoes can breed.
  - Keep grass cut short and gutters free of debris – this is where mosquitoes rest during the day.
- **Repel** mosquitoes by applying insect repellent with DEET.
- **Repair** or replace screens on doors and windows.

For more information, please visit [www.cookcountypublichealth.org](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org).

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