

Knowledge is power and the key to prevention is knowledge. Please refer to the following websites for more information on ways to stay safe at the beach and around water:

www.safekids.org

www.noaa.gov/ocean

www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/prevention.htm

www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/tetanus/default.htm#vacc

www.ccgh.org



Beach Reach Emergency Services Community Outreach



Never hesitate to seek medical advice. This pamphlet is for educational purposes only.

Have Fun. Be Safe

Have Fun

It is our goal with this community outreach to provide education on the most commonly seen injuries and questions that presented for care during the summer months in Morehead City NC.

Our emergency services team strives to meet all of your needs and to provide you with the highest level of care.

Be Safe

Ways to stay safe at the beach

The following list of most commonly related emergency department visit culprits. These items are the focus of this brochure.

1. **Hydration**
2. **Sun protection**
3. **Child safety**
4. **Stingray sting**
5. **Jellyfish and man of war**
6. **Oyster shells**
7. **Fish hooks**
8. **Tetanus vaccinations**
9. **Rip currents**
10. **Drowning**



Have Fun. Be Safe.

The goal of a vacation is to have a good time and return home in one piece with fond memories of the beautiful weather and the days at the beach. With a few simple things to keep in mind you will return home alive, in one piece and with those fond memories.

Hydration is the supply of water to the body in order to maintain balance. The human body, on average, is 70% water. This water is needed for the body to function. Salt, sweating, activity, the sun all use up this water. So keep hydrated by drinking lots of water while at the beach. Signs and symptoms of dehydration include an increase in thirst, dizziness, confusion, fatigue and nausea. If you or anyone you know or don't know is showing these symptoms, immediately get yourself or them out of the sun and drink water. The best course of action is to prevent this dehydration by drinking lots of water.

Sun protection: We all like a good looking tan, but the intent of a tan can quickly turn into a painful, unattractive peeling burn. Children are especially vulnerable to sunburn and **MUST** be protected from the painful, dehydrating effects of sunburn. This can be done by applying sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going in the sun, using sunscreen with a SPF of 15 or greater and with products that have the Skin Cancer Foundation seal. Use hats, umbrellas, or awnings to provide shade whenever possible. Taking a break and reapplication of sunscreen every hour will prevent sunburn also.

Child Safety: Keep your children in site. It may help to have an umbrella, set of steps or some other place act as a beacon to them and

you. That way, all will know where your spot on the beach is located. Also, keep your children hydrated, protected with sunscreen and make them take breaks in the shade. You are the parent. Your practices will be their practices. The time you take every hour or so will improve the fun on your vacation as it will prevent you having a dehydrated, burned, heat stroked child.

Stingrays, jellyfish, oyster shells and fish hooks are very common injuries at our beaches. Stingrays have a sharp barb that can impale the skin and cause extreme pain. Water as hot as you can stand it is the first line treatment for stingray attacks. You may need to be evaluated by a medical professional if the pain is extreme or if the barb is still in your skin.

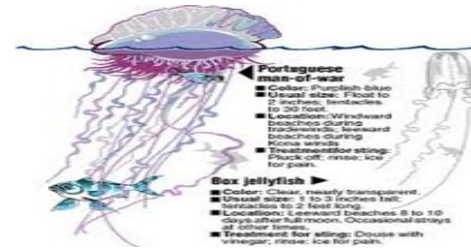
www.fossilweb.com



Jellyfish stings bring a lot of pain as well and vinegar soaks for 15-30 minutes is the first line

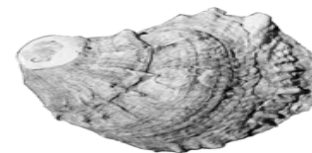
treatment. There are some commercial products you can have in your beach bag as well. Whether you use regular vinegar or a commercial product, **NEVER** use regular water as it will make it worse. Fresh water causes continue release of the toxin, the acetic acid in vinegar makes it stop. You will need medical treatment if you have any signs of an allergic reactions such as difficulty breathing.

Oysters are razor like shells that live in mud or deep under the water. If you jump into the water and don't realize the shells are there, you are

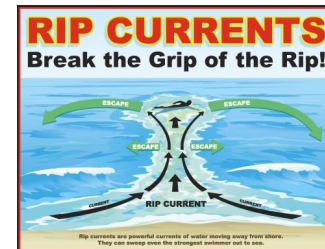


www.susanscott.net

jumping into razors. These shells, because of their habitat, carry a lot of bacteria. So by blindly stepping or jumping into the waters of eastern North Carolina you are essentially willingly cutting yourself on bacteria riddled razor blades. Medical treatment is needed to evaluate shell remains and to treat infection. Prevention is always best. Protect your feet when going into the waters and be aware of if you could be entering oyster habitats. Tetanus immunizations need to be evaluated with all cuts to the skin. It is recommended if you have not had a tetanus immunization booster in the last five years and you have broken your skin, to get a booster update.



There is no end to the power of **rip currents and drowning** danger. **PLEASE** visit www.ripcurrents.nooaa.gov to familiarize yourself with the signs of a rip current. **PLEASE** respect how the power of prevention and a little bit of awareness and knowledge can save your life.



Know how to swim and never swim alone. Don't fight the current. Instead, swim out of the current, then to shore. If you cant escape, float or tread water while waving and calling for help. A calm person can tread water for awhile. So it is better to calmly tread than to fight.

An actual drowning person may not be able to call for help or wave, they are simply struggling to push them selves up out of the water. If you notice someone with their head low in the water, mouth at water level eyes unable to focus or eyes are closed, get them help immediately. Forming a chain to reach the victim is safer than going out and drowning yourself. The ocean is a natural force. It will not stop or slow down for you. **PREVENT** death and disability by respecting the beach and by respecting your own life.

Flag Warning System

- Green Low Hazard – conditions are favorable for swimming
- Yellow Medium hazard – exercise caution
- Red High hazard – swim at your own risk
- Red over red Water closed to public use
- Purple Dangerous marine life present

