

# WELLNESSMONTHLY

Make Safety a Priority to Protect Your Health | June 2021



*Take extra health and safety precautions on hot, humid days, and when strong winds or lightning storms are expected.*

## Make Safety a Priority to Protect Your Health

In recognition of [National Safety Month](#) (June 2021), this edition of *Wellness Monthly* focuses on the importance of safety in terms of human health.

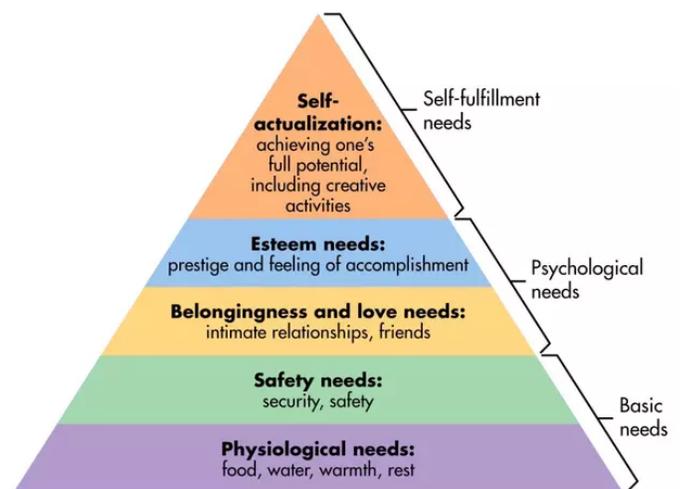
According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, a motivational theory, physiological, safety and security needs must be met before a person can satisfy psychological needs such as feeling loved and able to achieve one's full potential.

### Situational Awareness

We know that preventive interventions work because accident, injury and fatality rates decline when safety is considered a high priority. However, it's hard to know when you've dodged the proverbial bullet. You may have forgotten to put a warning sign on a broken staircase, but no one came along, tripped and fell. Or you might have been texting while driving and not noticed you ran a stop sign – fortunately, no one was crossing the intersection.

Situational awareness is a critical factor in incident prevention and your personal safety. You might refer to it as having "street smarts." It involves your perception of the environment in which you find yourself, how you react to it and your ability to project likely outcomes.

Risk management professionals suggest assessing exposure risk from all angles and taking into account the views of others as well as your own. A subconscious bias may influence your decision and cloud a more logical response.



*Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*

To help satisfy your need for safety and security, here are some questions to consider when you venture out:

- Is the area well-lit?
- Where is the nearest entrance and exit?
- Is the walking surface uneven or slippery?
- Is the traffic stop-and-go or moving too fast?
- Are you alone or are other people around?
- Do you talk/text when you should be paying attention to your surroundings?
- Do you have your car keys, a flashlight and other belongings close at hand?

## Summertime Precautions

June 1 marks the beginning of summer fun in the U.S. It's a good time to review recommendations to help prevent skin cancer, heat illness and water-related incidents. It starts with being aware of conditions, including the weather forecast. For example, extra precautions should be taken at elevation, on high heat index days, or when strong winds or lightning storms are expected.

**Skin Cancer:** Unprotected exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays is a leading cause of skin cancer in the U.S.

To help prevent sunburn and skin cancer:

- Use broad-spectrum sunscreen with a protection factor of 30, even when it's cloudy.
- Wear lip balm, protective clothing, a hat, neck covering and UV-blocking eyewear.
- When possible, avoid direct sun exposure, especially at peak times of the day.

**Heat Illness:** You may not be aware when your body temperature is reaching a dangerously high level.

To reduce risk for heat illness:

- Avoid strenuous activities when the heat index is high; give your body a chance to acclimatize.
- Drink water throughout the day to stay hydrated. Avoid drinks with sugar, coffee or alcohol.
- Replace sodium lost through sweating by drinking a beverage containing salt and electrolytes.

Signs of heat illness include thirst, dark urine, less frequent need to urinate, loss of appetite, dry mouth, sunken eyes, mild constipation, and feeling lethargic or lightheaded.

**Water Safety:** Most Americans say they can swim, but surveys show less than half can perform basic life-saving skills. To stay safe in and around water:

- Review and follow boating safety rules and ensure there are life vests for everyone on board.
- Assess your swimming skills. You should be able to jump into the water over your head, tread for one minute, swim 25 yards without stopping, and able to get in an out without a ladder.
- Be aware of hidden objects, swift currents and cold water temperature. Do not dive where it is shallow or rocky.

Under any circumstances, no matter how much you pay attention to safety, incidents happen. That's when you will be happy you know how to use your first aid kit and what to do in an emergency.

## More Safety Tips

*To protect your health, here are some additional safety tips:*

- 1. Wear personal protective equipment recommended for your activity (e.g., work, sports, household projects).*
- 2. Know how to safely operate power tools and other equipment.*
- 3. Use a secure step stool or ladder when reaching at height.*
- 4. Take extra precautions around electrical hazards.*
- 5. Securely store medications, chemicals and firearms.*