

Expert debunks summer health myths

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Summer is here and that means many families will be spending time outdoors at the beach or by the pool. To help families prepare, Baylor College of Medicine expert Isabel Valdez, a physician assistant and instructor of family and community medicine, debunks four common summer health myths.

False: Saltwater is good for cuts

"This is a myth because saltwater from the [beach](#) can actually contain germs or bacteria that can infect an open wound," Valdez said. "You should wait until the wound is healed and sealed completely before submerging it in fresh or saltwater."

To help [wounds](#) heal, Valdez recommends washing the wound with warm, soapy water and to see your doctor if the wound becomes red, sore or warm to touch.

True (to a certain extent): You can get stomach cramps if you go swimming too soon after eating

If you go swimming or do any vigorous activities too soon after you eat, Valdez said there is a small chance you can get abdominal cramps or have an upset stomach because your food has not had time to settle.

She added that while swimming on a full [stomach](#) might be uncomfortable, it is not life-threatening. Swimming is a great exercise that you can enjoy, just be sure you've had time to digest.

False: You do not have to wear sunscreen when it is cloudy

"You definitely want to wear [sunscreen](#) even when it's cloudy because you are still going to be exposed to some UV rays," Valdez said. "I recommend always wearing an SPF over 30."

You also should reapply your sunscreen

throughout the day, especially if you are swimming or sweating, she said.

False: If you are in need of hydration, any drink will help

Drinking a cold soda or an alcoholic beverage is not going to hydrate you, Valdez said. In fact, excessive alcohol and caffeine consumption actually can cause dehydration. Alcohol and caffeine are diuretics and can cause your body to lose fluids.

"While you are out at the beach or hanging by the pool, the best way to hydrate yourself is to simply drink water," Valdez said.

Provided by Baylor College of Medicine

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