

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple A Day, Lake Region Healthcare's health and wellness program, featuring news you can use to live a healthier life. This is Katie Johnson, and my guest this morning is Brooke Hills. She is the Family Nurse Practitioner at Lake Region Healthcare in our Primary Care Department. Good morning, Brooke!

Brooke Hills: Good morning!

Katie Johnson: It's been a while since we've had you on the program. I think it was when you were brand new here, which was way back when.

Brooke Hills: That was about three years ago, I think I've been here now.

Katie Johnson: Okay, great. You're moved into the new clinic and enjoying practicing in your new space, I imagine.

Brooke Hills: Oh, the new clinic is beautiful! We have all this technology. Patients are just loving it.

Katie Johnson: Awesome. Well it is 4th of July; it is the middle of summer, and summer safety is a topic on a lot of people's minds as they are out enjoying the weather and all of the great things that Minnesota has to offer in the summer. We want to talk about safety first, and that includes all kinds of safety. It's a priority any time, of course, but why is it a special concern around the 4th of July holiday?

Brooke Hills: The 4th of July has so many different things going on. Of course there's the fireworks, then you have increased injuries with burns from simple things like sparklers, to you know, minor explosions. It's also always a hot day. We live in Minnesota in July, so it's going to be hot. You're going to have the heat exhaustion, those types of injuries. Then of course we have a lot of lakes, so people are at the lakes, and then you have an increase in those. A lot of different factors that kind of make the 4th of July a little bit busier for our E.R.'s and walk-in clinics.

Katie Johnson: Absolutely, and eating outdoors, of course, is a common thing on the 4th of July. Let's talk about food safety tips as a point to start out with. What are some tips you have for that?

Brooke Hills: You know, we like to just lay food out and forget about it. It's easy, but we've got to remember that things with mayonnaise, things with sour cream, need to be put back in the refrigerator and not left on the counter for too long. We're kind of big into grilling around this area. Making sure that our meats are cooked appropriately, not putting pork on there and leaving it a little bit rare in the center. Then of course good hand hygiene is always important when anyone is making food.

Katie Johnson: Those are great tips. As you mentioned, we have so many lakes to enjoy, and that's a common 4th of July activity. What are some tips you have for staying safe while

swimming and enjoying the water of Minnesota?

Brooke Hills: I think the biggest thing is knowing your comfort with the water. People who maybe go to the lakes just on the 4th of July, it's not worth trying to swim across the lake and back. Life jackets, you know, always having that life jacket on if you're not a really good swimmer. We kind of have a rule at my lake with the younger kids that you do not go on the sand without life jackets, and that just makes it a little bit more comfortable for all of the adults around. You know, a child that doesn't accidentally fall into the water. Really just making sure that you have that buddy watching you, and having your life jacket on, and knowing your comfort level in the water.

Katie Johnson: Setting that standard makes it easier for the kids, that you know, it's the same rule for everyone.

Brooke Hills: Exactly. You know, they have to do their swimming lessons. When they pass a certain level, and they're a certain age, that rule can go away. When they're young, it's just you feel like you need to hawk-eye them, and that just kind of makes it a little bit easier.

Katie Johnson: That's a great tip. How about out on the boat? That, of course, brings the speed and motorized factor into our enjoyment of the water. Some tips to offer there?

Brooke Hills: Statistically the biggest injury in boats, isn't really bad conditions, it's bad operators. Of course, no drinking and driving on a boat, just like you would a car. Limiting your distractions. We have loud stereos; we have a lot of people. Sometimes you'll see a boat that is completely overloaded with people, and it's really difficult for a driver to concentrate on what they're supposed to be doing when they have too many people on their boats. Experience of a driver, you know. The 4th of July when lakes are busy, really isn't the time to let your cousin who isn't really a lake person to drive the boat. That's probably the time where the operator of that boat should be the one manning it.

Katie Johnson: There are courses now, online courses I believe, that you can take, for younger inexperienced drivers to take, to help you with your boat safety knowledge as well.

Brooke Hills: Absolutely, and I really encourage those. People sometimes get a little bit lax with jet skis versus big boats, but that's when you see a lot of those injuries of those younger populations. When they haven't had a good course on safety, and they're allowing them to go out on jet skis.

Katie Johnson: Definitely worth the investment of time on that part. You mentioned alcohol sometimes being a part of our lake celebrations and 4th of July. What should we be reminded of to help keep us safe when alcohol is part of our celebration?

Brooke Hills: You know, I feel like a mom here, re-iterating all this stuff that we already know, but of course no drinking and driving. That's going to cause the most problems. A

lot of those firework injuries are with the alcohol, so making sure that we're just being safe. It's not worth letting off fireworks at 1:00 in the morning when you've consumed too much alcohol. That's when you're going to see those explosions take place. Staying hydrated is really important.

Katie Johnson: Staying hydrated, you mentioned on a hot day, can be a challenge. Do you have some tips for helping to remember to have the water and the things that keep us hydrated?

Brooke Hills: Freezing water bottles has always been a good thing for us. Putting them in the freezer so that they melt with you throughout the day. There is a lot of research to show that we drink more water when there's fruit in it, so we kind of have a thing at our house that have a container in the center where you can put fruit in. It does, and I guess it just probably tastes better, right, so that we want to drink more. Adding some lemon, or some berries, or something to water encourages people to drink more. The accessibility is the biggest thing. Always having that water bottle with you.

Katie Johnson: Right, and making it available for your guests, and remembering that pop and alcohol don't hydrate you. Right?

Brooke Hills: Correct. People think, "Well, I'm drinking," but if it's alcoholic, that doesn't count. I always encourage people for everyone one alcoholic drink, it'd be nice to have a glass of water as well too.

Katie Johnson: Definitely. Any other safety tips we haven't covered that you want to make sure that we make our listeners aware of as they're out enjoying the summer and the 4th of July holiday?

Brooke Hills: The fireworks is the biggest thing. Sparklers or something, that's something that we've all played with and are fun, but they are really dangerous. We give them to these little kids, and these little kids really don't know that you can't chase after someone with them. You see a lot of burn injury from simple things like that, that could really be prevented if we would just maybe keep the fire away from children.

Katie Johnson: We hope it doesn't happen, but in the event that people do need medical care on the 4th of July, let's talk a little bit about what their options are here.

Brooke Hills: Well of course, our E.R. is always available. That would be open 24/7, and then our walk-in clinic hours are 9-5. We'll just have to have people use their best judgment as far as which one would be appropriate for them.

Katie Johnson: Exactly, and there's some guidance for that on our website as well. Everyone will be back here on the clinic, bright and early on Tuesday morning. I imagine it might be a busy day.

Brooke Hills: Yes, I expect that as well too. Everyone coming back. We will be open on Tuesday.

Katie Johnson: Great. Well, Brooke Hills, Family Nurse Practitioner at Lake Region Healthcare. Thank you for sharing some safety tips for the 4th of July holiday and for summer in general with our listeners on Apple A Day this morning. We appreciate your time and your knowledge.

Brooke Hills: Thank you, and have a happy 4th, everyone!

Katie Johnson: Brooke Hills and Katie Johnson on Apple A Day today. Reminding you, there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day!