

NEWS RELEASE
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Contact: Katie McKinley
Director of Communications
Electra Hospital District
(940) 495-3981
katie.mckinley@electrahospital.com

What's the COVID-19 Risk of Common Summertime Activities in Texoma?

ELECTRA, TX — As summer shines brightly in Texas, fears caused by the coronavirus remain, which might mean your family is wondering about the safety of common summertime activities in Texoma.

While Electra Hospital District emphasizes that social distancing is important and a new mask mandate was recently released in Wichita County, many events and recreational activities in the area are slowly opening back up to the public. Local waterparks, farmers markets, and other outdoor activities are attractive to families that are more ready than ever to get out of the house and have a little summer fun. While this summer is certainly different from what we normally experience in Texoma, the good news is there are many summer activities that remain quite safe with a little advance planning.

COVID-19 risks of popular summer activities in Texoma

According to health officials, any activity carries a risk of exposure to the coronavirus, but the risks are minimal if precautions are taken.

According to the CDC, those with underlying health conditions and those over the age of 65 are still considered at increased risk of serious illness from the coronavirus. Experts say that social distancing (keeping at least 6 feet apart from others) and wearing a face covering, can help mitigate those risks. In addition, many outdoor activities pose a lower risk than indoor activities. These may include:

Playing in the water: The CDC says pools and beaches may be a safer summer activity as the virus has not been shown to survive in water or treated pools. Most open Texoma public swimming facilities now have reduced admittance and safety policies. Keeping at least 6-feet from other families is recommended.

Hiking and camping: Both are considered low risk, as long as families maintain a distance from other people and wear a mask when passing others on a trail.

Outdoor sports: When it's easy to maintain social distancing, like golf or tennis, outdoor sports are considered low risk, says the CDC.

Visiting parks: The CDC says visiting parks that are close to home is encouraged, but families should prepare before a visit. You should not visit parks or crowded recreational areas if you are sick or have been recently exposed to COVID-19. Playing on public playground equipment or participating in group activities is still discouraged.

Since State and local authorities are deciding whether parks and other recreational facilities are opening, the CDC suggests that you check with all parks you may visit in advance to be sure you know which areas or services are open, such as restroom facilities and concessions, and bring what you need with you such as sanitizer, wipes, and masks.

The National Park Service will decide on an individual park basis when to open, so check in advance before you go. Most of the National Parks will have limited access to visitor centers and concessions, and restroom facilities might be closed.

Don't forget important safety measures

No matter where you go or what activities your family will enjoy this summer, the CDC recommends the following safety precautions:

- Stay at least 6-feet away from others through social distancing.
- Avoid visiting crowded areas or large gatherings.
- Avoid close proximity with others outside of your household.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the restroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Bring hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol to use if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid using playgrounds and other public equipment.
- Wearing a mask is encouraged.

Be careful, stay safe

Electra Hospital District wants to remind you that a fun and enjoyable summer for your family is still possible by practicing social distancing and taking other steps to protect your health. Outdoor activities and limited exposure will give your family the fun-in-the-sun they crave, but make sure to plan ahead to reduce the risk of exposure.

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