

Great Smoky Mountains Institute at



TREMONT

*Connecting people
and nature...*

Camper Safety

We are proud to report that we have an outstanding safety record when it comes to kids and the outdoors. However, we do take the concerns of parents very seriously and below have provided some insight into risk factors during summer camp.

The Sun – Excessive exposure to the sun can lead to dehydration and/or varying degrees of sunburn. We work to prevent this by checking to make sure campers use sunscreen and drink lots of water. Fortunately, a good deal of the time our campers spend outdoors is under tree cover. We encourage campers to bring both water bottles and sunscreen for their personal use.

Swimming – Few things feel as refreshing at the end of a hot summer day as a dip in a cool mountain stream. We take every precaution and more when it comes to swimmer safety. A lifeguard is on duty at all times – plus many additional adult eyes. No jumping, diving, or running is allowed. Bare feet are prohibited; footwear with closed toes that protect the feet are mandatory. Campers are given a swim assessment at the beginning of the week, and those who feel less secure in the water are given life preservers to wear.

Little biters – The number of mosquitoes here is relatively small due to the fact that there is very little standing water here in the mountains. However, we do have our share of biting and sucking insects which also includes no-see-'ums and wood ticks. While these are rarely dangerous by themselves, they all can be vectors for diseases. We work to minimize exposure to this by avoiding areas

where we know them to congregate and by encouraging campers to use insect repellent as needed, and having campers perform 'tick-checks'. Wood ticks are not known to carry Lyme disease.

Bees and Wasps – Stings from these insects are painful but not dangerous unless there is an severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

While these are rare situations, our staff is trained in dealing with severe allergic reactions and administering epinephrine if necessary.

Reptilian neighbors – We are proud of our wide array of snakes in the Smokies. The two species that are venomous - copperheads and timber rattlesnakes – are among the shiest species. Our staff knows how to recognize them and of course do their best to spot them before they spot us. Like any wild animal, snakes try THEIR best to avoid contact with humans.