

# Clemson doc gives tips for staying healthy outdoors

BY NORM CANNADA  
THE JOURNAL

CLEMSON — With sunny skies and warmer temperatures back for the summer, local residents are enjoying all types of activities.

“Getting outside is healthy. It’s good for us,” Dr. Aaron Tolan, a pediatrician with Clemson Primary Care, told *The Journal* this week. “Being active is always good for our heart and mental health, too. It’s a great time of the year to do it around here.”

Tolan encouraged those

headed to the woods to be aware of their surroundings and check for potential bug and tick bites, along with contact with poison ivy.



Tolan

A Prisma Health news release of-

ferred tips to prevent bug bites:

- Wear clothing with sleeves, especially in heavily wooded areas, tall grass or when hiking. For an extra precaution, wear closed-toe shoes and

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tuck your pants into your socks.

- Use an insect repellent that contains at least 20 percent DEET. Be sure to read the instructions, especially if using in conjunction with sunscreen, and reapply as necessary.

- When outdoors, avoid scented perfumes, which are known to attract mosquitoes.

- Make sure the screens on all windows and doors are intact to keep out flying insects. If camping or sleeping outside, use a bed net.

- Teach your children about fire ant mounds, making sure they understand not to kick or poke any they see.

“If you’re going to be outside in the deep woods wear bug spray ... and check kids and yourself after you’ve been out in the woods to make sure you don’t have any attached ticks and such,” Tolan said. “Most ticks are going to be on the lower body. Be careful where you’re walking so you don’t get into things like poison ivy.”

Tolan added poison ivy usually has “three leaves

together” that are “often kind of greenish, reddish and smooth, fine-toothed or kind of lobed margins.”

He added most bug bites and poison ivy rashes can be treated at home with over-the-counter medication.

“Calamine lotion goes a long way with itches from bug bites or poison ivy,” Tolan said. “Unless something is getting worse for several days after you’ve tried over-the-counter treatment, then you can usually treat it home. If you have a rash or bite with a fever, you need to

see somebody, because that could be a sign of a more significant infection or reaction.”

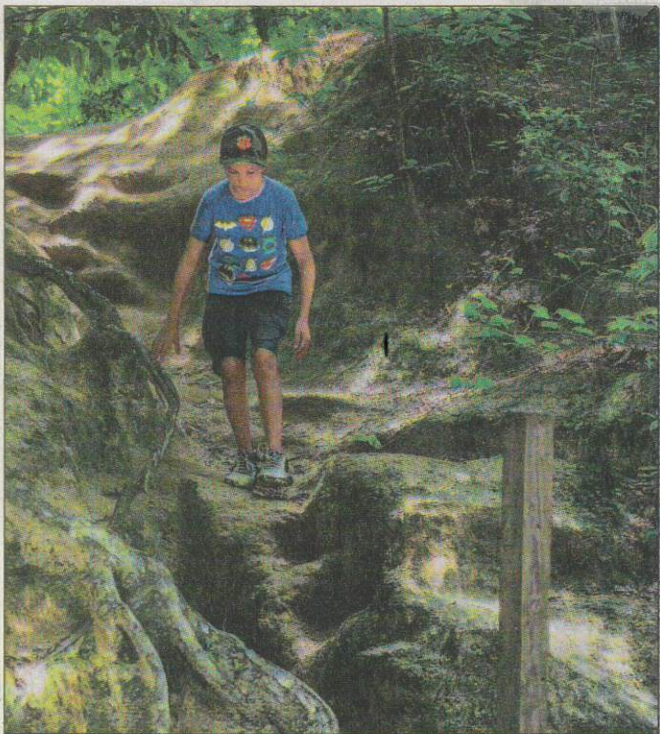
He said those headed outside should be prepared for the heat and sun.

“Higher temperatures do increase our own risk of dehydration,” Tolan said. “On hotter days, make sure you’re getting plenty of fluids. The hotter days are usually the brighter, sunnier days, so there are higher chances of sunburn. Be sure to wear sunscreen.”

Oconee emergency rescue workers have reported accidents on trails in recent years with hikers getting hurt, sometimes because they weren’t wearing the right kind of shoes or they went off marked trails.

“Use a good supportive shoe, one that can support your ankle,” Tolan said. “Unless you’re a very experienced hiker, hike with somebody, so that if you are injured, you’ve got somebody who can help you or go for help. Stay on the trails. Most of the trails are marked for our own safety.”

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Evan Runion, 12, of Clearwater, Fla., climbs down a hill near Stumphouse Tunnel in Walhalla on Thursday. A Clemson doctor offered tips this week for staying safe and healthy during outdoor activities this summer.



Twelve-year-old Jeremiah Coker, left, and Jayda Hart of Easley climb a trail near Stumphouse Tunnel in Walhalla on Thursday. A Clemson doctor said this week that hiking with another person is wise “so that if you are injured; you’ve got somebody who can help you or go for help.”