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NUMBER MOST LIKELY TO SAVE YOUR LIFE:

Heat index

When you think *scary weather*, what comes to mind? A tornado, a hurricane, maybe a flash flood? Don't overlook extreme heat—it kills more people in the United States every year than all those other events combined, says Eli Jacks, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service. Stay on top of the danger by checking your local weather forecast for the heat index, which tells you how hot the weather feels—and how hazardous it is—by factoring in humidity, an intensifier. When the heat index hits 105°F, seek out air-conditioned environments. If you do venture outdoors, drink plenty of water, wear lightweight clothing, stay in the shade, and avoid strenuous exercise.

MOST STUBBORN SEASONAL MYTH:

Swimming after a meal is dangerous

This warning dates back decades, but it turns out you *can* dine and dive. "There's nothing in medical literature to suggest that people have drowned or gotten hurt as a result of swimming too soon after eating," says Gerald K. Endress, a clinical exercise physiologist at Duke University Diet & Fitness Center. The belief arose from a theory that blood rushes to the stomach during digestion, cutting circulation to the arms and legs and raising the risk of muscle cramps. Not true, Endress says. Go on in—the water's fine, and you will be, too.

HEALTHIEST SUMMER COCKTAIL:

Sangria

It's tough to go wrong with wine and fresh fruit. "Sangria tends to be lower in calories than other summer cocktails because it has **less added sugar**," says registered dietitian Dawn Jackson Blatner, author of *The Flexitarian Diet* (McGraw-Hill). "And the fruit delivers a bonus hit of nutrients, such as fiber and vitamin C." At *BHG.com/Cheers* you'll find a recipe for White Sangria Punch that contains **six kinds of fruit** and **123 calories per glass.**

3 OF THE RISKIEST STATEMENTS YOU CAN MAKE RIGHT NOW:

1 "Why start wearing a bike helmet at my age?"

Coasting on good luck is a bad idea. Head injuries account for 70 percent of bicycling fatalities, with adults over age 25 making up a growing portion of those deaths, says Tess Benham, a program manager at the National Safety Council. Purchase a helmet that fits snugly, covers your forehead and the back of your head, and has straps that don't intrude on your peripheral vision. If your hair is long, a helmet with a ponytail cutout (like the Giro Skyla, $40; sporting goods stores) can help ensure a proper fit.

2 "The sky is cloudy, so I'll leave my sunglasses at home."

Even when you can't see the sun, its harmful ultraviolet rays have little trouble finding you. For eyes, that means an increased risk of cataracts, macular degeneration, and melanoma, says Dr. Paul T. Finger, an eye cancer specialist in New York City. Slip on UV-blocking shades (in addition to applying sunscreen) whenever you spend time outdoors during daylight hours.

3 "I'll just stay in my swimsuit—it'll dry sooner or later."

The problem is that it might not dry soon enough. A damp suit promotes the growth of bacteria and yeast, which can cause infection if they migrate to the urinary or reproductive tract, says Mary Jane Minkin, a clinical professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Yale University School of Medicine. Pack dry clothes in your beach bag and change as soon as you're done swimming for the day. ■