Post-Campout Checklist for Scouts and Venturers

By Three Fires Council Scouter Sherrie Nielsen and Bryan on Scouting

1. DRY YOUR TENT AND GEAR

Just say no to mold.

Put your tent up to dry right away, preferably outside.

"You don't know what insects have crawled in there," Sherrie says. "Last resort might be the basement or another uncarpeted area."

Do the same with your sleeping bag, rain jacket and anything else that might still be damp.

Or don't, and risk finding out at the next troop or crew meeting that you left your gear rolled up in the back of a leader's hot car!

2. WASH YOUR CLOTHES

Don't take your backpack or bag to your room. Instead, head straight for the laundry room.

Take out your dirty shirts, pants, shorts, bandanas, jackets, socks, underwear, towels … and whatever else needs to be thrown in the washer. And start a load.

Your parents will thank you, and so will your clothes.

Why? "First, if there are any bugs in the clothes they get washed (killed)," Sherrie says. "If you rubbed around in some poison ivy, this washes away the oil the plant deposited on the clothes. I heard about a Scout who once had poison ivy at a campout. Upon arriving home he laid his clothes over the bed, later sitting in the same spot and got poison ivy again!"

3. PUT AWAY FOOD

What do you do with leftover food from your patrol box? Hopefully the answer isn't to simply leave it in there. Gross.

"There might be a gallon of milk, cheese, bread, mustard, ketchup, mayo, etc.," Sherrie says. "You get the idea. It's time to put the food away or in the refrigerator. Don't forget the leftover sandwich in your backpack from the hike!"

4. TAKE A SHOWER

Your clothes are getting cleaned, but what about you? That foul smell — yeah, it's probably you.

"Soap up from head to toe, paying special attention to areas with hair and also ankles," Sherrie recommends. "Just like your clothes, you are trying to get rid of any fleas, ticks, chiggers or poison ivy/oak oils on the skin. As ankles are the closest uncovered area to the ground, they seem to be especially sensitive to bites, scrapes and plant oils."

5. APPLY BITE TREATMENT

Insect bites are a common side effect of a fun Scouting adventure.

Some troops/crews carry bite-relief sticks to immediately remove that itchy feeling.

"I carry clear (non-scented) ammonia and cotton balls," Sherrie says. "A friend in the military told me they use ammonia for bites. You can buy a half a gallon of ammonia (not the lemon-scented one) for the cost of one bite-relief stick."

If the bites are still itchy at home, don't scratch. Use calamine lotion.

6. CARE FOR THOSE FEET

See peeling skin around your toes or the bottoms of your feet? That may be athlete's foot, especially if you were recently in a shower used by other Scouts.

Find over-the-counter treatment for athlete's foot. This will keep the rest of your family from getting infected. Oh, and next time, remember those shower shoes!

Blisters? Treat them with moleskin padding.

7. WATCH FOR FLEAS AND TICKS

Dogs aren't the only mammals subject to those creepy crawlies known as fleas and ticks.

You have two options, Sherrie says: One is to grab a flea or tick comb to comb through your own hair.

The second is to have a parent do the check.

"Grab ticks with tweezers behind the head and gently and slowly pull it out of the skin along the line of its body. Then dispose," Sherrie says.

8. HAVE A HEADACHE?

If you came home with a headache or you're overly tired, don't rush for the aspirin just yet.

Instead, drink some water.

"One of the first signs of dehydration is a headache," Sherrie says. "You might also notice the dark yellow to orange color of your urine for a second clue."

9. ORGANIZE YOUR RECORDS

Now that you're clean, it's time to make sure all that advancement work wasn't for naught.

Record the campout in your *Boy Scout Handbook*, marking down how many nights you were camping.

"It's also a good idea to make yourself a note of anything you want to accomplish," Sherrie says. "Maybe it's a rank advancement item. Maybe it's a merit badge requirement. Did you do service time?

"Record the hours in the log in the back of your book. Is there a pen in the zippered pouch cover? It's a good time to put one in there."

10. RELAX

At last, you're done. Everything is taken care of, and you can plop in front of your favorite game or the TV. But wait: Is your homework done?

ANYTHING TO ADD?

What are your post-campout tips? Share them here:
http://bit.ly/postcampout