

I was struck by lightning!

On a sunny afternoon in 2004, nine-year-old Geoff Banninger was walking to a park in Colorado to see his sister play softball. But before he got to the park, Geoff was struck by lightning.

The lightning stopped Geoff's **heart** and his breathing. It burned his hair and left a burn line from his head to his foot. It blew his glasses off his face and melted them. It even made a hole in the bottom of his shoe. "I woke up about a minute later," says Geoff, "and my mom told me I had been struck by lightning."

What is lightning? A lightning strike is the **result** of a buildup of electrical charges[^] inside a cloud. We usually see lightning during stormy weather. But, as Geoff discovered, it can **happen** even on a sunny day.

Geoff's legs felt strange after he was hit, but he hasn't had any **further** problems since then. "I'm a lucky guy," he says. But being lucky is not the only way to **ensure** your safety during a thunderstorm. You can also follow the 30/30 **rule**: if you see lightning, and then hear thunder less than 30 seconds later, go inside a building. Then **wait** 30 minutes after the last thunder or lightning before you go back outside.

So how **likely** is it you will be hit by lightning." Fortunately,[^] it's not a **common** problem. According to the U.S. National Weather Service, your **chance** of being struck in your lifetime is only 1 in 5,000.

