

Stay Safe During Hot Weather: A Heat Safety Guide

As we age, our bodies don't cool down as easily. Hot weather can become dangerous quickly, especially if you have a chronic health condition or take certain medications. Follow these simple tips to stay safe and healthy during the summer months.

Stay Hydrated

- Drink water throughout the day—even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Limit alcohol and drinks with lots of caffeine, which can contribute to dehydration.
- If your doctor has placed you on a fluid restriction, follow their instructions and ask what is safest during hot weather.

Stay Cool

- Spend as much time as possible in air-conditioned places.
- Use fans to improve air circulation, but remember that fans alone may not prevent heat illness during very high temperatures.
- Keep blinds or curtains closed during the hottest part of the day.
- Take cool showers or place a cool, damp washcloth on your neck, wrists, or forehead.

Dress for the Weather

- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses when outdoors.
- Apply sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher to protect your skin.

Plan Outdoor Activities Wisely

- Avoid strenuous activities between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., when temperatures are highest.
- If you must be outside, take frequent breaks in the shade or indoors.
- Carry a bottle of water with you.

Eat Light Meals

- Choose fresh fruits, vegetables, and lighter meals.
- Avoid heavy, hot meals that can increase body heat.

Know Your Medications

Some medications can make it harder for your body to stay cool or increase your risk of dehydration. If you have questions about how heat may affect your medications, talk with your doctor or pharmacist.

Check on Others—and Let Someone Check on You

- Stay in touch with family, friends, or neighbors during hot weather.
- Ask someone to check on you if you live alone.
- Return phone calls or messages so others know you are safe.

Know the Warning Signs

Heat Exhaustion symptoms may include: heavy sweating; weakness or fatigue; dizziness or fainting; headache; nausea or vomiting; cool, pale, clammy skin

What to do: Move to a cool place, sip cool water, loosen clothing, and use cool wet cloths. If symptoms worsen or last longer than an hour, contact your healthcare provider.

Heat Stroke – A Medical Emergency – symptoms may include: body temperature above 103°F; hot, red, or dry skin; confusion or unusual behavior; slurred speech; seizures; loss of consciousness

What to do: Call 911 *immediately*. While waiting for help, move the person to a cooler place and try to cool them with cool cloths or a cool bath. Do not force someone who is confused or unconscious to drink fluids.

Extra Tips

- ✓ Never leave people or pets in a parked vehicle—even for a few minutes.
- ✓ Keep emergency phone numbers near your telephone.
- ✓ Make sure your cell phone is charged if severe weather is expected.
- ✓ If your power goes out and your home becomes too hot, go to a public cooling location if it is safe to do so.

Remember:

Heat-related illness can happen quickly. Drink water, stay cool, and ask for help if you begin feeling unwell.