

# PLAN FOR HEALTH

## Summertime Safety

JULY 2023



The summer months are a great time of year. Taking advantage of the warm days, mild evenings, and extra daylight are a few of the great things we can enjoy throughout these months. However, with the sun and heat, we must be mindful of our health and take precautionary steps when outside so we can enjoy the many things summer has to offer.

### HEALTHY TIPS TO BEAT THE HEAT

Certain populations are more at risk of developing heat-related illnesses, including adults age 65 and older, those with chronic medical conditions, people who work outside, infants and children and athletes. We often hear about times during the day to limit or minimize exposure to the sun and the heat. According to the National Safety Council, it is suggested to avoid spending extended periods of time outside during the hottest parts of the day between 11:00AM to 3:00PM. Check your local weather to see when there is a chance of a heat advisory or high humidity. When humidity is high, sweat won't evaporate as quickly. This keeps your body from releasing heat as fast as it may need to.

If you will be outside when high heat and/or humidity is forecasted, plan ahead:

- Do you have access to plenty of drinking water?
- Do you have access to air conditioning?
- What methods are you using to keep cool?

### WAYS TO KEEP COOL

The Centers for Disease Control suggests the following actions that can be taken to prevent any illness or death from the heat:

- Stay in air-conditioned buildings as much as you can. Air-conditioning is the number one way to protect yourself against heat-related illness and death.
- Use fans to circulate air and keep cool as well.
- Drink more water than usual and don't wait until your thirsty to drink.
- Check on a friend or neighbor who doesn't have air conditioning.
- Limit the use of your stove or oven, as this will make the inside of your home hotter.

Outdoor activities in the shade, or even enjoying time in a swimming pool to keep cool in the summer are great ways to beat the heat, and still get in plenty of exercise and activity. Here's a few ways to prepare for exposure to the sun:

- Pacing yourself, starting an activity slow and pick up pace or intensity gradually.
- Drink more water than usual, as muscle cramping may be a sign of a heat-related illness.
- Wear a hat and sunglasses to protect your face and eyes. Wear loose, light weight and light-colored clothes to protect your body and skin from the sun.
- And of course, sunscreen! The U.S Food & Drug Administration recommends applying at least an SPF 15 or higher 15 minutes before you go outside. Use enough to cover your entire face and body and reapply every two hours if swimming or sweating.

## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF HEAT RELATED ILLNESSES

Young and healthy individuals can still get sick, or experience possible heat cramps, heat stroke or heat exhaustion if out in the heat and sun for too long. Knowing these signs and symptoms can help you become more aware if you suddenly are not feeling well due to the hotter temperatures. For additional information on these conditions, please visit [www.weather.gov/safety/heat-illness](http://www.weather.gov/safety/heat-illness).

**Heat cramps** may be the first sign of heat-related illness and may lead to heat exhaustion or stroke.

- **Symptoms:** Painful muscle cramps and spasms usually in legs and abdomen and heavy sweating.
- **First Aid:** Apply firm pressure on cramping muscles or gently massage to relieve spasm. Give sips of water unless the person complains of nausea, then stop giving water.

### Heat Exhaustion

- **Symptoms:** Heavy sweating, weakness or tiredness, cool, pale, clammy skin, fast, weak pulse, muscle cramps, dizziness, nausea or vomiting, headache, and fainting.
- **First Aid:** Move the person to a cooler environment, preferably a well air-conditioned room. Loosen clothing. Apply cool, wet cloths or have the person sit in a cool bath. Offer sips of water.

### Heat Stroke

- **Symptoms:** Throbbing headache, confusion, nausea, dizziness, body temperature above 103°F, hot, red, dry or damp skin, rapid and strong pulse, fainting, loss of consciousness.
- **First Aid:** Call 911 or get the victim to a hospital immediately. Heat stroke is a severe medical emergency. Delay can be fatal. Move the victim to a cooler, preferably air-conditioned, environment. Reduce body temperature with cool cloths or bath. Use fan if heat index temperatures are below the high 90s. A fan can make you hotter at higher temperatures. Do NOT give fluids.

### Sharecare Featured Challenge:

Join the Paint Your Plate Challenge this July. Add healthier foods to at least one meal a day and be in the green for your nutrition for 21 days this month to complete the challenge. Join the challenge by going to [mycare.sharecare.com](http://mycare.sharecare.com), clicking **Achieve** → **Challenges** → **Upcoming** → **Paint Your Plate beginning on 6/24**.



## Plan ahead...Join us next month for August's health topic: *Family Health*