

Heat & Dehydration

People suffer heat-related illness when their bodies are unable to compensate and properly cool themselves. The body normally cools itself by sweating, but under some conditions sweating just isn't enough. Several factors affect the body's ability to cool itself during extremely hot weather. Other conditions related to risk include age, obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, poor circulation, sunburn, medications and alcohol use. Heat-related illnesses are preventable. People with the greatest risk from heat-related illness are; infants and children up to 4 years of age who are sensitive to high temperatures; people over the age of 65; people with a variety of disabilities who may not compensate for heat stress efficiently and are less likely to sense and respond to change in temperature; people who take psychotropic medications; people who are overweight may be prone to heat sickness because of their tendency to retain body heat.

Here are some things to consider during hot summer months:

1. Drink plenty of fluids. Water is your best choice. Don't wait until you're thirsty. Don't drink alcohol or drinks with lots of sugar as these actually cause your body to lose more fluid.
2. Avoid heavy meals - they add heat to your body.
3. Wear light weight clothing and sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher. Wear a hat or visor to keep the sun off of your face.
4. Limit your outdoor activity to early morning or evening hours. Try to rest in shady areas so that your body has a chance to recover. Pace yourself if you're not used to working or exercising in a hot environment. Take a cool shower.
5. Use the buddy system. Have a friend or relative check on you during a heat wave.
6. Stay indoors, preferably in an air-conditioned place. If you don't have air conditioning, go shopping, to the movies or the public library - even a few hours in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler. Electric fans may provide comfort, but when the temperature is in the high 90's an electric fan will not prevent heat-related illness.
7. Never leave anyone in a closed, parked vehicle.
8. Ask your doctor if any of the medicines you are taking are effected by or causes sensitivity to heat.

For More Information about Heat:

Center for disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat>

Extreme Heat: A Prevention Guide to Promote Your Personal Health

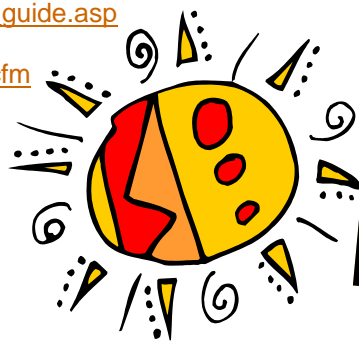
http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.asp

Medication and You

<http://www.safemedication.com/meds/medSafety.cfm>

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.MayoClinic.com/health/heat-exhaustion>



KEY POINTS:

- Keep hydrated-Drink water.
- Dress light.
- Go swimming or take a cool shower.
- Stay indoors in air-conditioning.
- Limit outdoor activities especially if you are on certain medications that may affect your body temperature.