

Sunshine & Summertime

Whether it's work, play or just relaxing, if you are outside you need to be sun and heat savvy.

PROTECT YOURSELF

Take note of the forecast including the temperature and UV index. Be prepared for heat and sun exposure. Unprotected exposure to the sun's harmful rays can lead to cataracts and cancer of the skin and eyes. Excessive heat can lead to life threatening illness if precautions aren't taken. Be smart, be safe.

COVER UP

Seek shade whenever possible. Especially between 11 am – 4 pm, when the sun is strongest.

Slip on sun-protective clothing. Wear clothing that covers as much of the body as possible. When temperatures are hot, choose breathable, lightweight, loose-fitting and light coloured options.

Slop on SPF 30+ sunscreen and lip balm. Apply broad spectrum (UVA and UVB) water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outside. Reapply frequently during sun exposure (at least every 2 hours and after swimming or excessive sweating).

Slap on a broad-brimmed hat. Create your own personal shade; a hat with an 8 cm brim or larger will help cover your head, face, neck and ears. Attach a back flap and/or visor to a construction helmet if you are working out in the heat.

Slide on sunglasses that have both UVA and UVB protection. Close-fitting and wrap-around styles will provide the most protection.

STAY COOL

Schedule - Plan outdoor activities or events at a cooler time of the day.

Hydrate - Drink plenty of cool water, often and BEFORE you feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol as this will increase the risk of dehydration.

Escape - Avoid long exposure to heat whenever possible. Seek shade, go into an air conditioned space or use a fan.

Refresh - Have a cool shower, splash yourself with cool water or go for a swim to cool off.

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HEAT ILLNESS

Sunburn is caused by overexposure to ultraviolet radiation (UV rays). Signs of sunburn may not appear for a few hours, with the full effect taking 24 hours or longer. Skin will be red and painful to touch. Severe sunburns may even blister.

Heat Cramps are caused by losing too much water and salt through sweating. Painful cramping can begin suddenly and usually affect the legs or abdomen.

Heat Exhaustion is more severe than heat cramps. Excessive sweating will be noticeable and the skin will feel cold, pale and clammy. The person may feel weak or dizzy and may complain of blurred vision, headache and/or cramps. Pulse rate will be weak and rapid, and breathing will be shallow. Heat exhaustion may result in nausea and vomiting, fainting or unconsciousness.

Heat Stroke is a life threatening medical emergency. It occurs when the body temperature gets too high. Skin will be hot, red and can be dry or moist. Pulse will be rapid and strong (weak in later stages) and breathing may be noisy. Symptoms of heat exhaustion will also be present. The key to telling the difference between heat exhaustion and heat stroke is that with the first skin will feel moist and cold and in the later it will be hot and flushed (wet or dry).

FIRST AID

Sunburns – Move out of the sun and into a cool location. Apply a cool compress or take a cool (not cold) shower/bath. Do not use harsh soap to wash burned skin. Apply aloe gel but avoid creams that can trap heat inside the skin or may contain numbing medications. Drink extra fluids over the next few days. Take pain relievers as needed to relieve discomfort. Keep sunburnt areas covered in loose, breathable clothing to protect from further sun exposure. Do not break open any blisters that may develop.

Heat Cramps – Move to a cooler environment, preferably air-conditioned, environment. Remove excessive clothing and sip water slowly until the cramps go away. Electrolyte beverages such as Powerade™ or Gatorade™ help rehydrate. Massage muscles if it does not cause further pain.

Heat Exhaustion – Move to a cooler environment. Loosen or remove excessive clothing. Apply cool, moist towels/cloths over as much of the body as possible. Drink water or an electrolyte beverage in small sips to avoid vomiting. If vomiting occurs and continues, seek medical attention immediately.

Heat Stroke – Call 911. Move the person to a cool location and immediately attempt to lower their body temperature. If the person is not responsive or is vomiting do not give anything by mouth. Remove all excessive clothing and cool the body by covering with wet sheets/cloths and fan the sheets or place them in cool water (particularly armpits, neck and groin areas). DO NOT leave them unattended, especially while in water, as there is a risk of seizures in heat emergencies.