

Staying Safe in the Heat

We all look forward to summer: the long days, cookouts, gardening, and just spending time outdoors. Less enjoyable are the dreaded heat and humidity. Taking a few precautions can help keep you healthy when those summer temperatures start to creep up.

- Exercise and garden during cooler hours of the early morning or evening.
- Drink plenty of fluids - 6 to 8 glasses of water per day. Avoid drinks with caffeine, alcohol or those with large amounts of sugar and salt. For older adults, the feeling of thirst declines with aging and moisture loss through thinning skin increases, so be sure to increase water intake if you are exercising or doing prolonged physical activity.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored and loose-fitting clothing.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, and apply sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB rays, with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or more.
- Review your medications. Some can cause side effects, like increased sensitivity to ultraviolet rays. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions.
- Spend time in air conditioning. Electric fans may provide some comfort and exhaust air from hot rooms, but they won't prevent heat-related illness. Taking a cool shower/bath or moving into an air conditioned space to cool off are better options. If you don't have air conditioning in your home, spend part of each day at locations that do: the Library, the Y, Lapham, a movie theatre, or Staying Put.
- Don't leave food items in the car or outdoors – food spoils quickly in the heat.
- Eat light, cool, easy-to-digest foods.
- Know the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness, especially heat stroke. Signs to look for include confusion, disorientation, dry skin, excessive tiredness, headache, lethargy, nausea, and a rapid pulse. If you or someone you know experience these symptoms, seek medical help immediately by phoning 911.