

Staying Cool and Safe in Hot Weather



Cool Tips

- ♦ Go to a cool place like the shopping mall, the movies, the library, or a senior center.
- ♦ Slow down. Plan outdoor activities before noon or in the evening.
- ♦ Stay indoors as much as possible. If air conditioning is not being used, stay on the lowest floor. Keep shades down and blinds closed, but windows slightly open. If safe, leave windows open at night.
- ♦ Electric fans do not cool the air, but they do create a breeze, which cools your body.
- ♦ Take cool baths or showers.
- ♦ Place a damp towel around your shoulders to reduce body heat.
- ♦ Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing and a wide brimmed hat. Use sunscreen with a SPF of at least 15.

Safety Tips

- ♦ Air out hot cars before getting into them.
- ♦ Drink more fluids than usual even if you do not feel thirsty. Water is the safest liquid to drink during heat emergencies. Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine; they increase the heat's effects on your body.
- ♦ Eat small meals and eat more often. Avoid foods that are high in protein, which increases metabolic heat.
- ♦ Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.
- ♦ If you take diuretics, ask your physician about a lower dosage during hot weather.

For more information phone 415-457-4636.

Warning Signs of Heat Problems

HEAT EXHAUSTION

When body fluids are lost through heavy sweating, blood flow to vital organs is reduced. This results in a mild form of shock. If not treated, the victim may suffer heat stroke.

Symptoms

- ♦ Cool, moist, pale, or flushed skin
- ♦ Heavy sweating
- ♦ Headache
- ♦ Nausea or vomiting
- ♦ Dizziness
- ♦ Exhaustion
- ♦ Body temperature will be near normal

Treatment

Get the person to a cooler place. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths and ice packs. If the person is conscious, give cool water to drink. Make sure the person drinks slowly. Give a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes.

HEAT STROKE

Heat stroke is life-threatening. The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweat to cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may occur.

Symptoms

- ♦ Hot, red skin
- ♦ Little or no sweating
- ♦ Changes in consciousness
- ♦ Rapid, weak pulse
- ♦ Rapid, shallow breathing
- ♦ Body temperature can be very high

Treatment

Call 9-1-1 or a doctor. Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the body. Immerse victim in a cool bath, or wrap wet sheets around the body and fan it. Use ice packs. Watch for signals of breathing problems. Keep the person lying down and continue to cool the body. If the victim refuses water or is vomiting, or there are changes in the level of consciousness, do not give anything to eat or drink.

Family members that have loved ones in skilled nursing or assisted living facilities should try to visit often.

