

## Sun and Heat Safety

Everybody loves a beautiful summer day, but when it comes to sun, you really can get too much of a good thing. This tip sheet is intended to help you and your family stay safe in the sun.

### Save Your Skin

Your skin can start burning within 15 minutes of being in the sun. The fairer you are, and the longer you stay out without protection, the more you burn. The symptoms of severe sunburn, also called sun poisoning, include redness, blistering, pain, swelling, headache, nausea, fever, chills, dizziness, and dehydration.

Sunburn isn't just painful: it raises your risk of getting skin cancer later in life. What's more, exposure to dangerous UV rays has increased in the past few decades due to depletion of the ozone layer. Here are some things you can do to protect yourself:

- Be mindful that the sun is at its strongest, between 10 am and 4 pm. You can get a sunburn even on a cloudy day. Concrete, sand, water, and snow reflect 85% to 90% of the sun's UV rays, increasing your exposure.
- Use sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or more every time you go outside. For protection against both UVB and UVA rays, choose products that contain Avobenzone (Parsol 1789) or zinc oxide. Cover your entire body, including your neck, ears, lips, feet, and scalp if you have thinning hair. Reapply sunscreen after swimming and toweling off, or if you have been perspiring.
- Because they play outdoors, children get three times more sun exposure than adults. Protect your children using a sunscreen with an SPF 30 or higher. Keep infants ages six months or younger out of the sun.
- Choose clothing made of darker, tightly woven fabric. Wear sunglasses and a hat that shades your face.
- Don't use tanning beds or lamps.



### Skin Cancer Statistics

- Each year, more than 1.2 million new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed in the US alone.
- Melanoma, the most deadly, fast growing type of skin cancer, accounts for roughly 76,380 cases of skin cancer a year.
- Melanoma kills one person every hour.
- One blistering sunburn doubles a child's lifetime risk of skin cancer.



## Don't Let the Heat Beat You

During extremely hot and humid weather, your body can't cool itself effectively. You may lose too much fluid and salt through dehydration or sweating. Your body temperature begins to rise, with potentially serious consequences:

### HEAT EXHAUSTION

The symptoms of heat exhaustion are as follows:

- Weakness and muscle cramps.
- Heavy sweating and cool, pale, and clammy skin.
- Fast but weak pulse.
- Dizziness or nausea and even vomiting. Seek immediate medical attention if the person vomits more than once.
- **Passing Out.** First aid for heat exhaustion starts with moving the person to a cooler environment, laying them down, and loosening their clothing. Fan the person and cool them off with wet cloths. Offer sips of water.

### HEAT STROKE

Heat stroke is a life-threatening medical emergency. Symptoms include one or more of the following:

- Altered mental state or confusion.
- Severe throbbing headache.
- Nausea and/or dizziness.
- Shallow breathing.
- Body temperature above 103°F.
- Skin that is hot, red, and dry, with no sweating.
- Rapid and strong pulse.
- **Loss of Consciousness.** Call 911 or get the victim to the hospital immediately. Move them to a cooler, preferably air-conditioned environment, and cool them down with a cloth soaked in cool, not cold, water. Use a fan if the heat index temperatures are below the high 90s. (If the heat index is higher than that, a fan can actually make the victim hotter.)  
**Do NOT give fluids.**

**If you are not sure whether a person is suffering from heat stroke or heat exhaustion, err on the side of caution and call 911.**

## Protecting Yourself and Your Family From the Heat

1. Never leave children, elderly or disabled adults, or pets in parked cars! In the hot summer sun, a dark dashboard or seat can heat up to 200°F or more. The temperature inside the car can rise to unsafe levels in just two minutes. Leaving the windows slightly open will not make a significant difference in how fast the car heats up.
2. Take heat waves seriously and pay attention to the heat index. This measures how hot it feels when you factor in relative humidity. The combination of heat and humidity can be extremely dangerous — not good weather for playing sports or spending a lot of time outside.
3. Drink plenty of water and non-caffeinated and non-alcoholic beverages.
4. Wear loose, lightweight clothing.
5. Seek air conditioning if you don't have it at home. Go to a mall or public library and cool off.
6. Teach your children to come inside when they feel overheated. Make sure they drink plenty of fluids before going outside, even if they are not thirsty. Dress them in loose, light colored clothes. Reduce your child's exposure to heat by limiting outdoor activities to before noon and after 6 pm.