










FROM THE DESK OF THE DDSN MEDICAL CONSULTANT

Summer Care:

-  Avoid Outside 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
-  Cover up
-  Use Sunscreen
-  Use Insect Repellent
-  Drink Plenty of Water
-  Never Leave Person In Car
-  Supervise All Swimming

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SUMMER CARE



Summer is a wonderful time of the year - barbecues, water sports, sunbathing and vacations. However, all of us, caregivers and cared for, will enjoy the time more safely if we take some sensible precautions.

What is heat related illness?

To keep us healthy, we have systems to keep our body temperature stable. Hot conditions stress our body. The heat of our body from surroundings and our activity will put our temperature up. We can get rid of the heat energy by the evaporation of sweat. Loose fitting light clothes of natural fibers (or some specialized artificial fibers) will help us keep our temperatures by these processes. The control of our temperature therefore requires plenty of fluid intake to balance the sweat lost to cool us.

If the loss of fluid is marked or if our temperature rises, we can get sick. We will feel dizziness, headaches, muscle weakness and cramps, and nausea and vomiting. In severe cases, this can lead to heat stroke and even be fatal.

How can we prevent this?

We can reduce heat stress by avoiding being in hot conditions. We need to reduce our activity outside between 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. in summer heat.

The most important way to protect from effects of heat stress is to drink sufficient amounts of water. Drink water before going into the heat. Have frequent breaks and drink water every 15 -20 minutes, even if you do not feel thirsty. (Heavy exercise in hot surroundings can



need 2 - 4 glasses of cool liquid each hour extra to the daily intake of 6 - 8 glasses a day). Fluids with alcohol, caffeine or high sugar content can cause loss of more fluid from the body, so cool water is best. Have short periods in the sun, go to shade, drink, reduce activity - if you or the persons you care for seem lightheaded, nauseous or have become quiet, get out of the heat.

Never leave a person alone in a closed car or vehicle. The temperature rises quickly and can be fatal.

We need to be especially careful for persons who are on some specific medications. Please check with your health care staff. If consumers have high blood pressure or heart disease, we need to watch. Those with respiratory problems need care if the weather causes a high ozone alert. Some medications will reduce the body's ability to adjust to hot weather, and we need to reduce time in the heat for persons on psychotropics (e.g. haloperidol,

risperidone), drugs for Parkinson's Disease, urinary retention, gut cramps (e.g. Artane, Cogentin, Levsin, Detrol), diuretics (water pills) and some blood pressure pills.

Remember, avoid heat, reduce activity, drink plenty of water

What else do we watch for?

Sunbathing can create a desired tan, but it can also cause undesired skin changes that can lead to a high risk for skin cancer. The risk is greater for persons whom have had severe sunburn on the hands, neck and face areas. In the South Carolina sun, we need to cover up with hats, clothes and sunscreens. A baseball cap does not cover face and neck, so we may need to change our fashion. Sunblocks like Zinc Oxide will stop the sun rays reaching the skin to burn it. Sunscreens bind to the skin and reduce the effect of sunlight. Use SPF 15 or more and apply it before going into the sun and regularly, particularly if in the water. Water and cement reflect sunlight and can make a sunburn more likely.

Sunshades for the eyes help protect them from the damaging rays of ultra-violet light in the sun.

Some persons on particular drugs need to watch for extra skin sensitivity to sunlight and not go out in the sun. Diuretics (water pills), some antibiotics (e.g. tetracyclines, sulphas etc.), Phenothiazines, and other antipsychotics and neuroleptics, some antibiotic drugs and some skin treatments; all mean we need to avoid sun exposure.



Cover up with sunscreen, hat, and glasses and reduce time in the sun.

Heat rash is a skin response to heat and moisture which is more likely in hot weather. Wear light clothing of natural fibers.. Please make sure persons in wheelchairs have a chance to get out of the chair at least every 2 hours.

Insect bites- Please avoid them! DEET based repellants are effective. Recent studies showed Skin So Soft works, but only for 20 minutes. If a person has bites, keep them clean. If a bite or sting causes lip or mouth swelling or breathing difficulties, call for help.

Swimming- Water activity is fun. Please always have someone who can help persons out of the water watching anyone in the water. We always need to have a watcher/buddy ready to help.

Enjoy summer pleasures and always ask before going out:

1. Should we do this now or when it is cooler? Can we reduce our time in the heat?
2. Has this person got risk factors we need to think of?
3. Are we covered properly?
4. Do we have enough fluid?
5. Have we applied sunscreen?
6. Have we applied insect repellent?
7. Do we have enough fluid?