

# Wellness Newsletter

## Summer Fun Can Come Undone

JUNE 2018

**Long summer days are so inviting. But working and playing outdoors in the sun on hot, humid days can take a toll on your health.**

Fortunately, heat illness and skin cancer can be prevented.

### Heat Illness

Heat illness – or hyperthermia – occurs when you are dehydrated and your body can't cool itself off. Your temperature can quickly rise to a dangerous level, especially when you do strenuous activities on high heat index days. It's important to recognize and respond to signs and symptoms.

**Swelling, muscle cramps and light-headedness** are early indicators of heat illness. Drink water or a beverage containing salt and electrolytes. For light-headedness, sit or lie down in a cool place and slowly rehydrate.

**Heat exhaustion** is a serious medical condition. Signs include heavy sweating, cool and moist skin, weakness, nausea and vomiting, headache, and fast heart rate or weak pulse. Sit or lie down in a cool area. Loosen your clothing. Sip water and apply a cool, wet cloth or ice packs to your skin. Get immediate medical attention for vomiting.

**Heat stroke** is a potentially fatal illness that requires an emergency response. Watch for high body temperature, hot, red, dry or moist skin, difficulty breathing, rapid and strong pulse, confusion, anxiety and restlessness. Seizure and unconsciousness are possible. After calling for emergency medical help, move the person to a cool area and apply wet cloths. Do NOT attempt to give fluids.

***"The three primary rules to help prevent heat-related illness are water, rest and shade."***



### Sunburn and Skin Cancer

Exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays causes skin cancer. To lower your skin cancer risk:

- Wear protective clothing, a hat, neck cover and UV-blocking eyewear.
- As feasible, avoid direct sun exposure at peak times of the day.
- Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen and lip balm daily, even when it's overcast.

A sunscreen protection factor of 30 blocks out about 97 percent of the sun's harmful rays. Reapply it at least every two hours, and after swimming or sweating. Don't forget to put sunscreen on your feet if you are wearing sandals or going barefoot!

If you slip up and get sunburned, try these remedies to relieve discomfort:

- Take a cool shower or bath, or use a wet compress.
- Apply aloe gel or moisturizer for damaged skin.
- Use a non-prescription pain reliever that is safe to take at work.
- Drink water and avoid further exposure.

Get medical advice if you have a severe sunburn and feel ill. Signs and symptoms include blisters covering a large area, skin infection, facial swelling, fever and chills, upset stomach, headache, confusion and feeling faint.

The Skin Cancer Foundation recommends an annual skin exam. Get checked right away if you have unusual-looking moles or growths, discolored or scaly skin patches, or sores that don't heal.

## Why Drink Water?

Sometimes people forget how essential it is for their health and safety to stay well-hydrated.

Drinking water helps replenish essential fluids lost by sweating, which helps your body dispel heat. About 60 percent of your body is water by weight. Your brain is about 73 percent water. So, even a 2 percent loss of water through sweating can impair physical and cognitive function.

This is how your body will tell you when you are getting dehydrated:

- Feeling thirsty
- Dark rather than pale-colored urine
- Less frequent need to urinate
- Loss of appetite
- Dry, sticky mouth
- Dry, sunken-looking eyes
- Mild constipation
- Feeling lethargic
- Lightheadedness

Here are some water-wise tips:

- Drink a glass of water when you wake up.
- Carry a water bottle. Take sips throughout the day.
- A rule of thumb is 8 ounces of water 8 times a day.
- Add fresh citrus, berries or cucumbers to water for flavor.
- Eat fruits and vegetables with high water content.
- Avoid beverages containing sugar, coffee or alcohol.

Water sustains life, but don't overdo it. Consuming a large amount at one time can dilute sodium in your blood and cause serious health problems. That's why beverages containing salt and electrolytes are recommended if sodium depletion is a problem.

***"If you take a summer trip to the mountains, remember that UV intensity increases about 5 percent for every 1,000 feet gained in elevation."***



## Shades are Cool

*To protect your eyes from sun damage, look for eyewear that:*

- Blocks UVA and UVB rays
- Screens out 75-90 percent of visible light
- Have lenses free of distortions and imperfections
- Wrap around the side of your head

## Did You Know?

*The color and degree of darkness sunglasses provide have nothing to do with their ability to block UV rays. Gray lenses allow for proper color recognition.*