

Heat (Heat Wave)
March 2007

- **Avoid too much sunshine.** Sunburn slows the skin's ability to cool itself. The sun will also heat the inner core of your body, resulting in dehydration. Use a sunscreen lotion with a high sun-protection factor (SPF) rating.
- **Postpone outdoor games and activities.** Excessive heat can threaten the health of athletes, staff, and spectators of outdoor games and activities.
- **Avoid extreme temperature changes.** A cold or even a cool shower taken immediately after coming indoors from hot temperatures can result in hypothermia, particularly for elderly and very young people.
- **Stay indoors as much as possible.** If air conditioning is not available, stay on the lowest floor, out of the sunshine. Even in the warmest weather, staying indoors, out of sunshine, is safer than long periods of exposure to the sun.
- **Keep heat outside and cool air inside.** Close any registers that may allow heat inside. Install temporary reflectors, such as aluminum foil-covered cardboard, in windows and skylights to reflect heat back outside.
- **Conserve electricity not needed to keep you cool.** During periods of excessive heat, people tend to use a lot more power for air conditioning. Conserve electricity not used to keep you cool so power can remain available and reduce the chance of a community-wide outage.
- **Vacuum air conditioner filters weekly during periods of high use.** Air conditioner filters can become clogged or filled with dirt, making them less efficient. Keeping them clean will allow your air conditioner to provide more cool air.
- **If your home does not have air conditioning, go to a public building with air conditioning each day for several hours.** Air conditioned locations are the safest places during excessive heat because electric fans do not cool the air. Fans do help sweat evaporate, which gives a cooling effect. However, when temperatures exceed 90° F (32° C), fans become ineffective in reducing heat-related illness.
- **Dress appropriately:**
 - Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing that will cover as much skin as possible. Lightweight, light-colored clothing reflects heat and sunlight and helps maintain normal body temperature. Cover as much skin as possible to avoid sunburn and the over-warming effects of sunlight on your body.
 - Protect your face and head by wearing a wide-brimmed hat. A hat will keep direct sunlight off your head and face. Sunlight can burn and warm the inner core of your body.
- **Drink plenty of fluids even if you do not feel thirsty.** Drink regularly and often. Your body needs water to keep cool. Water is the safest liquid to drink during heat emergencies. Injury and death can occur from dehydration, which can happen quickly and be unnoticed until too late. Symptoms of dehydration are often confused with symptoms of other conditions.
- **People who have epilepsy or heart, kidney, or liver disease; who are on fluid-restricted diets; or who have a problem with fluid retention should consult a doctor before increasing liquid intake.**
- **Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine.** They can make you feel good for a little while, but they dehydrate the body.
- **Eat small meals and eat more often.** Large, heavy meals are more difficult to digest and cause your body to increase internal heat to aid digestion, worsening overall conditions. Avoid foods that are high in protein, such as meats and nuts, which increase metabolic heat.