

Beating the Heat

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Our Minnesota summers bring warm weather, beautiful sunshine, and a reprieve from the long winters, but summer in Minnesota can also mean extreme heat and humidity. Heat related illnesses such as heat stroke and exhaustion, cramps and rashes, and sunburn can quickly occur to any person who is exposed to extreme heat. Extreme heat occurs when summertime temperatures are much hotter or more humid than average. Added humidity can make conditions seem even hotter than it really is.

Heat related illnesses happen when our bodies are not able to properly cool themselves. This causes our temperatures to rise faster which can cause damage to the brain and other organs. However, heat related illnesses are preventable! Following the below tips will increase your likelihood of staying healthy in extreme heat:

- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing
- Wear Sunscreen
- Do not exert yourself outdoors
- Limit your outdoor activities to when it's coolest
- Drink plenty of fluids, but stay away from sugary and alcoholic drinks
- Follow the weather reports so you know what to expect

In addition to knowing how to beat the heat, it's equally as important to recognize the signs and symptoms that accompany heat related illnesses and know what to do if you or someone you know experiences them. Common symptoms include:

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Hot, red, dry, or damp skin
- Blisters
- High body temperature
- Confusion

Heat stroke is the most severe heat related illness and is a medical emergency that requires immediate attention. If you suspect heat stroke, contact 911 immediately. Certain people are at higher risk for heat related illnesses – babies and young children, pregnant women, people over the age of 65, those who are overweight, people who are physically or chronically ill, athletes, those with low income, and outdoor workers. Special care and attention should be given in these circumstances.

Summer in Minnesota is short and sweet and by knowing how to stay healthy in the heat as well understanding symptoms of heat related illnesses will help our community to enjoy these fun summer months as best as possible. You can learn more about extreme heat by checking out the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat .