

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency



Heat Stroke and Heat related illness facts and tips

Deaths to heat stroke are not limited to warm weather states. From 1996 to 2002 there were more than 175 deaths nationwide due to heat stroke. The youngest children are often the most vulnerable. More than 1/3 of the deaths reported since 1996 were of children **less than 1 year of age**. **Remember:** A child's body temperature increases three to five times faster than an adult's and children are not able to dissipate heat as efficiently as adults. **Remember, on a warm day the temperature in a closed vehicle can reach 120 degrees in about 30 minutes.** Therefore, every minute counts when a child is trapped in a hot vehicle.

Tips for Preventing Heat-Related Illness

- Drink more fluids (nonalcoholic)
- Don't drink liquids that contain caffeine, alcohol, or large amounts of sugar—these actually cause you to lose more body fluid.
- Stay indoors and, if at all possible, stay in an air-conditioned place. If your home does not have air conditioning, go to the shopping mall or public library—even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler.
- Taking a cool shower or bath, or moving to an air-conditioned place is a much better way to cool off. Fans may help, but the overall help is limited.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- Although any one at any time can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others. Check regularly on:
 - Infants and young children
 - People aged 65 or older
 - People who have a mental illness
 - Those who are physically ill, especially with heart disease or high blood pressure

If you must be out in the heat:

- Limit your outdoor activity to morning and evening hours.
- Cut down on exercise. If you do exercise, drink two to four glasses of cool, nonalcoholic fluids each hour. A sports beverage can replace the salt and minerals you lose in sweat.
- Try to rest often in shady areas.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses and by putting on sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher (the most effective products say “broad spectrum” or “UVA/UVB protection” on their labels).

Visit our Web site for additional information about heat stroke and other health concerns

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