

It's Going to be Hot Out There!

Reminders from your Health Promoting School
Coordinator Erin Switzer

WE ARE HAVING A HEAT EVENT!

This is the time of year we have all been waiting for and there is lots of excitement to get out and enjoy the hot weather that is in our immediate forecast. While the sun is shining and our desire to be outside is high, we must keep in mind that **children are more vulnerable to heat-related stress than adults**. This is because children absorb more heat than adults while sweating less and children may not recognize the need to take preventative action such as reducing physical activity. Parents and teachers need to be aware of the vulnerability of children to heat-related stress. The following tips are simple precautions for avoiding heat-related stress in children.

Heat exhaustion results when children (or adults) get overheated and dehydrated. Dizziness, lightheadedness, headaches, nausea, sweating, tiredness, irritability are some symptoms to watch for.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS:

Ensure children always have access to water
Encourage children to have regular drinks and not large amounts of water all at once
When outside, hold activities on the grassy areas, the asphalt can be 30 degrees hotter than the air temperature. Check the playground equipment for extreme heat
Avoid high energy outdoor activities in the hottest part of the day - avoid direct sun and have regular drink and rest breaks (every 15 minutes)
Keep in mind children will rarely complain about being overheated
Have some fun with spray bottles and water filled sponges 😊

HOT WEATHER PARENT TIPS FOR HOME AND SCHOOL:

Make sure your child takes a bottle of water (or an electrolyte beverage) with them to school and/or has easy access to water at all day. They should have a drink before going outside.

Check that your child is wearing appropriate clothing for hot weather such as lightweight, light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing, a wide-brimmed or bucket hat, UV-protection rated clothing, and SUNSCREEN

Provide plenty of fruit and vegetables to eat. Avoid salty foods and foods that need refrigeration.

Use an insulated lunch bag - a frozen drink bottle or freezer brick will help maintain a safe temperature

Design play activities using hoses, sprinklers, and pools. Remember that playground equipment can heat up quickly and stay hot and could cause burns to the skin.

Remember that animals are susceptible to heat exhaustion too!

If a child does present with signs of heat-related stress, give them water, and allow them to rest in a cool, shaded area. If their condition does not improve, or they become disoriented, confused, or non-responsive then seek urgent medical attention. Severe heat-related illness (heat-stroke) is potentially life-threatening.

Videos for younger children:

Sun Safe Play Everyday

<https://youtu.be/Zc2wE5dVx3Y>

Guy and his dog Norman sing-a-long about playing safely in the sun.

Why Should You Wear Sunscreen - Body Science for Kids

<https://youtu.be/ZwpbuCJr63E>

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Interior Health's heat safety reminders

IH Wide – With temperatures across our region soaring this week, Interior Health reminds everyone that too much heat can be harmful to your health.

Excessive heat exposure can lead to weakness, disorientation and exhaustion. In severe cases, it can also lead to heat stroke, also known as sunstroke. Heat stroke can be a life-threatening medical emergency.

Who is most at risk?

Anyone can suffer from heat-related illness, but some people are at greater risk. Take extra care to check on the following people regularly:

- Infants and young children, who rely on adults to monitor their environments and to provide them with enough fluid to drink;
- People 65 years or older, or anyone who needs assistance monitoring their wellbeing;
- People with heart problems and breathing difficulties;
- People who exercise or who work outside or in a hot environment.

Symptoms to watch for?

The symptoms of heat-related illness can range from mild to severe. They include:

- Pale, cool, moist skin
- Heavy sweating
- Muscle cramps
- Rash
- Swelling, especially hands and feet
- Fatigue and weakness
- Light headedness and/or fainting
- Headache
- Nausea and/or vomiting

More severe symptoms – including high fever, hallucinations, seizures and unconsciousness – require urgent medical attention. Call 911, move to a cool place, and cool the person with water and fanning.

What steps can people take to avoid heat related illness?

1. Plan your outdoor activity before 11 a.m. or after 4 p.m., to avoid the most intense sun.
2. Drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids. Water is the best choice.
3. Avoid physical work or exercise outside in the heat of the day.
4. If you must work or exercise outside, drink two to four cups of water each hour, even before you feel thirsty.
5. Rest breaks are important and should be taken in the shade.
6. Apply sunscreen to prevent sunburn, but remember this doesn't protect from the heat.
7. Stay in the shade, or create your own shade with lightweight, light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing, a wide brimmed hat, and/or an umbrella.

8. If you're struggling to keep cool, move indoors to an air-conditioned building or take a cool bath or shower. At temperatures above 30° C (86°F), fans alone may not be able to prevent heat-related illness.
9. Never leave children or pets alone in a parked car. Temperatures can rise to 52° C (125° F) within 20minutes inside a vehicle when the outside temperature is 34° C (93° F). Leaving the car windows slightly open will **not** keep the inside of the vehicle at a safe temperature.
10. Regularly check older adults, infants and children, those doing a lot of physical activity or working outside, and people with chronic disease or mental illness for signs of heat-related illness. Make sure they are keeping cool and drinking plenty of fluids. Check on those who are unable to leave their homes, and people whose judgment may be impaired.

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