

# Saint Anthony's Offers Summer Heat Tips

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One of the number one health concerns during the summer is monitoring the body's reaction to heat. It's important to be aware of some of the body's warning signs, says John Peipert, RN, BSN, MM, CENP, Director of Saint Anthony's Health Center Emergency Services:

Heat cramps -- usually in the legs and stomach, generally accompanied by fever and nausea, caused by too much loss of body salts and water through perspiration.

Heat exhaustion -- body temperature and blood pressure drop, skin turns clammy and cool, the face pales and the pulse weakens. Persons with heat exhaustion are usually wringing wet with perspiration, especially on their face and forehead.

Heat Stroke -- the most disastrous consequence of unbearable heat, also known as sunstroke: sweating stops, the skin becomes dry and hot, the face flushed, the pulse rapid. Heatstroke victims often slip into unconsciousness.

"Extreme heat levels are more likely to affect the very young, the elderly and those with chronic illnesses," John notes.

"If someone is suffering from heat exhaustion, the best thing to do is to get them into a cool environment, elevate their feet and give them some water. You should contact the person's doctor or call the Emergency Room with any questions."

Other summer health concerns may include: sunburns, insect bites, cuts and bruises, burns fractures, or other problems. Follow these safety tips:

- Avoid excessive exposure or strenuous outdoor exercise when the sun's rays are most severe between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- Be sure to replace lost fluids with extra liquids -- water is the best!
- When working or playing outside, avoid wearing perfumes, flower-printed clothing and always wear shoes to prevent insect bites.
- Avoid playing with fireworks. They create a serious risk for burns, eye injuries and other hazards.
- For sunburns, bathe in cool water and drink plenty of fluids. Call a doctor if the burn is severe or the person is feverish and ill.

If you have any questions about heat-related health conditions, please call Saint Anthony's Emergency Department at 618-474-6260.