

Saint Anthony's Emergency Services Offers Tips for Surviving the Heat

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(Alton, IL) -- With the summer temperatures rising, spending time outdoors is common practice. To make sure your warm weather enjoyment doesn't turn into dehydration, sunburn, heat exhaustion or worse, the health care professionals from Saint Anthony's Emergency Department want to share why it's so important to protect yourself from the



heat while working, playing or

vacationing.

Two extreme ailments caused by the intense summer heat are heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

“Your body maintains a healthy core temperature by evaporating sweat. With higher summer temperatures it can become difficult for the body's cooling system to remain efficient,” says John Peipert, Director of Emergency Services at Saint Anthony's. “An individual suffering from heat exhaustion is usually cool and damp to the touch and

their skin may appear gray. In addition, the individual may present with headache, fatigue, vomiting, nausea, thirst, profuse sweating and possible altered level of consciousness.”

It is best to move the patient from the hot environment to a shaded, cooler area and remove any extra clothing and loosen any clothing, which is tight or restrictive. The patient should be urged to lie down. If the patient is conscious and alert, provide suitable fluids such as tomato juice, orange juice, or other commercially available sodium balanced drinks.

“Heat stroke occurs when the body is overwhelmed with more heat than it can possibly handle,” says John. “Heat stroke is a serious medical condition. It can lead to death without immediate emergency medical attention. In heat stroke, body tissue starts dying because the body temperature rises too quickly. A sufferer will present with nausea, chills, vomiting, throbbing in the head, disorientation and a slowing of sweating. They might become unconscious.”

He encourages everyone to be aware of the following health tips:

1. Drink plenty of water. When heat and humidity are high, you can quickly become dehydrated; even in a pool surrounded by water. By the time most of us feel thirsty, we’re already slightly dehydrated. It’s especially important during warm weather to drink eight glasses of water a day.

2. Protect your eyes and skin. Wear sunglasses and sunscreen to protect your eyes and skin from the sun’s dangerous UV rays. Sunburn abuse can lead to skin cancer, the most prevalent cancer in the U.S. So wear protective clothing and sunscreen with at least a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15. For sunburn relief, aloe vera gel or cool white vinegar can help ease the pain.

3. Beat the heat. As temperatures rise, your body works overtime to stay cool. Any outdoor activity in high heat is physically stressful and can lead to heat exhaustion or even heat stroke. Wear light, loose fitting clothing and don’t overdo it.

4. Balance activity with rest. Sunshine and warm weather offer a variety of activity. But don’t push yourself beyond your physical limits or let overexertion squash your energy. Schedule time to rest, relax and take a nap when necessary.

5. Don’t sweat it. One fact of heat is sweat. Even a few seconds out in the yard can cause those little salty beads to pop out under your arms and on your face. Since sweating causes you to lose precious minerals, keep your electrolytes in balance by

getting plenty of minerals from fresh fruit and vegetables.

6. Overcome grill overkill. Nothing says, "fire up the grill" quite like warm weather. Studies suggest that including antioxidant rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables containing vitamins C, E and carotenoids may offer protection against harmful grilling carcinogens.

7. Eat smart and healthy. Vacations and summer picnics can be a huge temptation to overeat. Don't fall for it. Too much junk food could destroy your summer fun. Keep your energy up by limiting sweets and fatty foods and focusing on fresh summer fruits and vegetables, whole grains and healthy lean protein.

For more information on Saint Anthony's Emergency Services, please call 474-6260.

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