



# Several Ways to Guard Yourself Against the Summer Sun

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## The Heat Is On

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With hot temperatures here, area health care professionals are offering advice to stay safe.

Angela Holbrook, MD, Emergency Room medical director at Alton Memorial Hospital, warns that the hot temperatures may result in an increased risk of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. With heat exhaustion, the body becomes dehydrated.

“If you suffer heat exhaustion, you may become flushed, light-headed and may have a dry mouth,” Dr. Holbrook said. “You may also experience stomach cramping and vomiting. Your body salt level can become dangerously low as well, which can result in cramps.”

If you suffer heat stroke, your body won’t perspire and your body temperature may rise as high as 106 degrees. People suffering heat stroke may experience mental status changes and increased confusion. They also may experience stomach cramps and vomiting. Heat stroke can result in seizures or coma.

Heat stroke is considered a medical emergency. You should seek immediate medical assistance for anyone with heat stroke. To avoid heat stroke, heat exhaustion and other heat-related illness, Dr. Holbrook recommends the following:

- Avoid the sun or limit your time in the sun.
- Stay indoors if possible and use fans or air conditioning when possible.

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- When exercising, drink plenty of fluids that replenish salt.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing.
- Avoid beverages that contain alcohol or caffeine; both can dehydrate the body.
- Check on the elderly frequently as they are more prone to suffer heat-related illness.
- Be aware of medications that may interfere with sweating and thirst.