

How to Stay Safe When Drinking in Extreme Heat

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ST. LOUIS - Over the summer months, many outdoor activities and events often include alcohol. But with the extreme heat, a drink can become dangerous if you don't take proper precautions to stay hydrated.

The Illinois Liquor Control Commission (ILCC) has issued tips to stay safe if you plan to drink alcohol during the excessive heat warning that's currently in effect through the Greater St. Louis area.

“Hot, humid summer days cause fluid loss through sweat, and alcohol consumption causes fluid loss through frequent urination; together, these can be a deadly combination and can quickly dehydrate even the healthiest individual,” the ILCC said in a press release.

Dehydration, heat stroke and heat exhaustion are very common in extreme heat but potentially deadly if you don't treat them immediately. If someone is feeling dizzy,

lightheaded, nauseous or otherwise unwell, the National Weather Service recommends drinking water and seeking out a cooler environment by going indoors or at least finding shade.

When drinking, these tips are especially important. Most health professionals recommend drinking one cup of water for every alcoholic drink you consume. Avoid drinking on an empty stomach, as this can dehydrate you faster and worsen any feelings of sickness. The ILCC adds that you should take breaks from the outdoors and regularly cool off, especially if you plan to be in the sun for long periods of time or between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when it's hottest.

Staying cool and hydrated are the main ways to treat and prevent heat-related illnesses. But if symptoms last longer than an hour or a person vomits more than once, the ILCC urges you to get immediate medical attention.

While Midwestern summers are usually warm, July is set to be one of the hottest months on record across the globe. The National Weather Service issued a severe weather warning for heat on July 25 that will run through 9 p.m. on Friday, July 28 in the Metro East. They say that the heat index could reach 114 degrees.

These temperatures can be especially dangerous for the elderly. Make sure to check in with the older people in your life. Don't let dogs and cats stay outside for long periods of time. Some medications can lower your tolerance to heat, so be aware if this is a side effect of your medication.

Ultimately, Lisa Gardner, the executive director of ILCC, encourages people to "be mindful" this summer, especially when alcohol is involved.

"As always, we want merrymakers to have fun but be safe, as extreme heat plus alcohol can be a dangerous cocktail," she said.

To find a cooling center near you, click [here](#).