



June 2017

Staying healthy in the heat

In order to help our students and their families have a safe and healthy summer, we are sharing the following information that is provided by the Maine Center for Disease Control.

Keep cool:

- . Use air conditioning to cool down or go to an air-conditioned building such as a store or a library.*
- . If you don't have air conditioning in your home, open the windows on the shady side of the house and close them on the sunny side to try to cool it down.*
- . Take a cool shower or bath*
- . Wear loose, lightweight, light colored clothing*
- . Stay out of the sun as much as possible – especially during the hottest part of the day between 10 am and 4 pm*
- . Wear sunscreen (SPF 15 or greater) and a ventilated hat (i.e. straw or mesh) when in the sun, even if it is cloudy.*
- . Check the local news for health and safety updates*

. Never leave children, pets or those with special needs in a parked car, even briefly. Temperatures in a car can become dangerous within a few minutes.

Drink fluids

- . Drink more fluids regardless of your activity level*
- . Avoid alcohol, caffeine and sugary drinks, since these actually cause you to lose more body fluid.*
- . If you are on fluid restrictions or on diuretics, ask your doctor how much fluids you should drink*

Rest frequently

- . Take regular breaks from physical activity – at least every hour*
- . Avoid strenuous activity during the hottest part of the day (between 11 am and 4 pm)*

Recognizing the early signs of serious heat related illnesses:

Heat stroke is a life threatening condition. Body temperatures can reach dangerous levels. Warning signs include: hot, dry, red skin (no sweating), rapid pulse, high body temperature (equal to or greater than 103 degrees), headache, loss of alertness, confusion, rapid and shallow breathing and unconsciousness or coma. Emergency 911 should be called immediately. While waiting for assistance, cool the person rapidly with such methods as moving them to a shady or cooler area, using cool water on the head, neck armpits and groin, ice, fans and loosening their clothing. If the person is awake give them cool fluids.

Heat exhaustion typically occurs when people over exert themselves in high heat and humidity. Symptoms include heavy sweating, dizziness, headache, nausea and weakness. Move the person to a cool place, have them drink fluids and rest, loosen their clothes and cool them off with water or wet cloths. Heat exhaustion can quickly lead to heat stroke. So, if symptoms worsen or do not improve, get medical help.

Dehydration

Dehydration happens when the body loses a lot of water and salt. This can happen if someone has been out in the heat for a long period of time. **Severe dehydration can be life-threatening. Infants and the elderly are more likely to become severely dehydrated. Call 911 for severe dehydration. Signs and symptoms include extreme thirst, dry skin and mouth, little to no urination, rapid heartbeat and breathing, dizziness and confusion.** For dehydration that is not severe: drink fluids, move to a cool location, lie down and rest.

Heat cramps are muscle cramps in the abdominal area or extremities (e.g. arms and legs) that often occur in people who sweat a lot during strenuous activity and as a result their muscles lose salt and moisture. There is usually heavy sweating and mild nausea. Move the person to a cool place to rest and carefully stretch and massage the cramped muscle. Have the person drink some cool beverages such as water or a sports drink. Avoid exercise or heavy work for a few hours. Seek medical attention if no improvement or conditions worsens.

Sunburn damages the skin and causes the skin to become red, painful and warm after sun exposure. Medical attention should be sought if the sunburn affects an Infant or if there is fever, fluids-filled blisters or severe pain. Otherwise, the person should avoid sun exposure, apply cold compresses or immerse the burned skin in cool water, apply moisturizing lotion or aloe vera to the burn.

Heat rash is a skin irritation caused by excessive sweating during hot humid weather and is most common in young children. The rash looks like a red cluster of pimples or small blister and is most common in the neck and upper chest and increases such as in the elbow and groin. Move the person to a cooler place and keep the affected area dry. The person can also use talcum powder to increase comfort.

Please remember that heat related illnesses are preventable.

We wish you a safe, healthy summer.
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