

July
2022

Environmental Awareness

Heat and sun safety

Longer days of sunshine and summertime activities are in full swing this July. Summer is a great time to get outside and enjoy the warm weather with friends and family. Just remember to be mindful about heat and sun exposure as you dive into your favorite activities this season. Most people know they should take precautions against sunburn. But as temperatures rise, you also need to be aware of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The more you know about the signs and symptoms of these conditions and how to prevent them, the more you will be able to enjoy being adventurous in the great outdoors.

Heat exhaustion happens when your body temperature rises too quickly to naturally cool itself down. Heavy physical activity in hot conditions raises your risk. It is important to drink plenty of water and take frequent breaks to cool off. It's also helpful to avoid alcohol and caffeine when you are spending a lot of time in the heat.

Another step you can take to keep yourself cool is to learn about the warning signs of heat exhaustion. It is usually accompanied by dehydration. It can cause heavy sweating, confusion, and dizziness. Other symptoms to watch for are headaches, muscle cramps, and vomiting. Immediately move to a cooler environment and drink plenty of fluids if you or anyone else experiences these symptoms. Seek emergency help if symptoms do not improve within 15 minutes of first aid. Untreated heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.

Heat stroke is a medical emergency. Call 911 immediately when symptoms appear. Symptoms of heat stroke include confusion, seizures, and lack of sweating. Rapid and shallow breathing and a rapid heart rate may also be present. Seek first aid and try to cool the victim until medical help arrives.

Although heat-related illnesses are serious concerns this summer, you can still enjoy the sunshine this season. Just remember to prevent sunburns and heat-related illnesses by following the key points of sun safety:

- Apply sunscreen frequently and evenly throughout the day.
- Use broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 that blocks both UVA and UVB rays.
- Wear wide-brimmed hats and avoid tight, dark-colored clothing.
- Avoid sun exposure from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Seek shade when you need a break.

Get outside and enjoy your favorite activities this season now that you have the proper heat exposure tips. Hiking, camping, swimming, and spending time outside are all wonderful activities for your well-being. Reach out to a medical professional or call 911 if you think you are suffering from a serious sunburn or other heat-related illness.

Source: OSHA.gov, CDC.gov, WebMD.com, MayoClinic.org



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Summer Fun Checklist

It's easy to forget to pack the summer essentials when you head outside for a day of fun in the sun. Use the checklist below to make sure you have everything you need before heading out the door this summer.

- First aid kit
- Sunscreen
- Refillable water bottles
- Wide-brimmed hat
- Sunglasses
- Change of clothes
- Change of shoes
- Swimsuits
- Blankets/towels
- Snacks
- Prepared food (if needed)
- Iced cooler (if needed)
- Plenty of water
- Wagon/stroller
- Flotation devices
- Umbrella
- Car chargers
- Bug spray

Additional items to bring:

Watch this [video](#) to learn how to respond to heat stroke.

Check out the [8 essentials](#) for building your own first aid kit.

Read this [article](#) for more safety tips to consider this summer.

Hydration tips

About 60% of your body is made of water. It plays a role in keeping all your body systems working well. Staying hydrated can reduce your risk of dehydration and other health problems like kidney stones and urinary tract infections. Consider the tips below to stay hydrated this summer:

Drink enough water

Men should drink about 13 cups (104 oz.) per day

Women should drink about 9 cups (72 oz.) per day

Watch for dehydration symptoms

Headaches

Dizziness

Digestive issues

Choose healthy beverages

Plain or sparkling water

Sugar-free sports drinks

Add lemon or lime slices to water

Eat water-rich fruit

Watermelon

Apples

Strawberries

Eat water-rich veggies

Lettuce

Cucumbers

Carrots

Listen to your body and pay attention to your thirst to help guide you toward drinking plenty of water. Consider talking to a medical provider about your specific fluid needs. Many factors including your age, gender, activity level, and overall health may impact your provider's advice.

Source: [EatRight.org](https://www.eatright.org), [WebMD.com](https://www.webmd.com)

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Digital detox: reducing screen time

Screen time has been on a steady rise over the years. Screens are in our cars, scattered throughout shopping centers, and even found at gas pumps – there are screens everywhere. Since the pandemic, screen time has increased even more. More people are working from home, which can weaken the boundaries between work life and home life.

When your workday ends, do you turn your computer off, or do you find yourself going back to it to check messages? You may find yourself working on one last project or perhaps working on your computer while you watch TV in the evening. Does social media take over your free time? Do you find yourself scrolling and then realize an hour has gone by?

There are pros and cons to media, but there must be a balance in our lives for our own mental and physical health. Too much screen time can cause us to disconnect from important things in life like family, exercise, work, chores, or hobbies.

This month, challenge yourself to limit screen time as often as you can. When you unplug, you become more aware of everything around you. You can engage with the world and the beauty of interacting with others.

Reducing screen time can:

- Give you more time with family and friends.
- Decrease stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Improve your overall mood.
- Allow you to be present in the moment.
- Give you more opportunities to be creative, be more active, enjoy the outdoors, and find new hobbies.
- Reduce mindless snacking, making it easier to maintain a healthy weight.
- Improve your sleep.

Things you can do to reduce screen time:

- Shut off your electronic devices at the end of your workday.
- Turn off all media 60 minutes before bedtime.
- Eat without media of any kind to allow mindful eating.
- Engage in conversation with those around you.
- Set boundaries. This could include designating a screen time schedule for you and your family.
- Create tech-free zones.
- Explore new hobbies that can eliminate the urge to look at screens.

Many things in life come down to balance and learning to set boundaries. Look at your screen time and decide how you can disengage there and engage in other uplifting, mood-boosting, creative activities.

Source: [WebMD.com](https://www.webmd.com), [MayoClinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)

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