



Beat the Heat!



Heat is one of the leading weather-related killers in the United States, resulting in hundreds of fatalities each year. North American summers are hot. East of the Rockies, summertime tends to combine both high temperatures and high humidity, making daily walks more difficult. High heat and humidity put extra stress on your body because sweat does not readily evaporate to cool your skin. In cooling yourself, your heart rate also increases.

Here are some tips to make your daily walk safe during these hot summer months:

- **Schedule your walk or activities for the coolest time of the day**, either early morning or late evening. Take care if you are a child, older adult or anyone with health issues.
- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Dehydration is a key factor in heat illness. Stay well-hydrated with water and don't wait until you're thirsty. Consider sports drinks to replace sodium, chloride and potassium if you exercise intensely.
- **Dress appropriately.** Lightweight, light colored, loose fitting clothing allows sweat to evaporate and keeps you cooler.
- **Use sunscreen.** Wear sunglasses. Wear a wide-brimmed light colored hat. A sunburn decreases your body's ability to cool itself and increases the risk for skin cancer.
- **Get acclimated.** Gradually increase the length of time you are outside in the heat. This usually takes one to two weeks.
- **Watch for signs and symptoms of heat-related illness:** muscle cramps, nausea or vomiting, weakness, fatigue, headache, dizziness, confusion, low blood pressure, increased heart rate, profuse sweating, or visual problems. These can worsen quickly and become a medical emergency.

Be safe during your summer walking and activities - don't quit because of the heat!

Sources:

1. Mayo Clinic, Keeping Cool in Hot Weather: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/fitness/in-depth/exerciseart-20048167>
2. National Weather Service, Heat Safety: <https://www.weather.gov/grb/heat>
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Tips for Preventing Heat-Related Illness: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heattips.asp>

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