



Keeping Your Family Safe During Summer Fun

By Carolyn Nicolaysen · June 12, 2018

Now is a time to consider the dangers we all face during the summer months guaranteeing our summer can be a time we reflect on with joy and not regrets. If you live in the southern hemisphere be sure to copy the tips the next two weeks and add them to your preparedness binders for reference in a few months.

The most serious of the summertime dangers are heat and the sun itself.

First let us talk about heat. Do you know the danger signs? Would you know when it is time to take a family member out of the sun or worse, to the doctor for help? Now is the time to learn and prepare.

What Are the Symptoms of...

Heat cramp symptoms include:

- Severe, sometimes disabling, cramps that typically begin suddenly in the hands, calves or feet.
- Hard, tense muscles.
- Heat cramps are the least serious of all heat related threats.

What to do?

Get the person to a cooler place and have them rest in a comfortable position. Lightly stretch the affected muscle and replenish fluids. Give a half glass of cool, not cold, water every 15 minutes. Do not give liquids with alcohol or caffeine in them, as they can cause further dehydration, making conditions worse. Carbonated beverages are also not recommended. In this case water is by far the best remedy.

Heat Exhaustion symptoms include:

- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Excessive thirst
- Muscle aches and cramps
- Weakness
- Confusion or anxiety
- Drenching sweats, often accompanied by cold, clammy skin.

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- Slowed or weakened heartbeat or dramatically increased heart rate.
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Agitation

Heat exhaustion is more serious than heat cramps and can quickly cause a serious health issue.

What to do?

Get the person out of the heat and into a cooler place. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, again not cold, wet cloths, such as towels or sheets. Change cloths often too keep them cool. If the person is conscious, give cool water to drink. Make sure the person drinks slowly. Give a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Let the victim rest in a comfortable position, and watch carefully for changes in his or her condition. If they do not improve after 30 minutes get to a doctor.

Heat Stroke symptoms include:

- Nausea and vomiting.
- Dizziness or vertigo.
- Hot, flushed, dry skin.
- Rapid heart rate.
- Decreased sweating.
- Shortness of breath.
- Decreased urination.
- Blood in urine or stool.
- Increased body temperature (104 to 106 degrees Fahrenheit).
- Confusion, delirium or loss of consciousness.

Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition. Help is needed fast. Please take note of the fact that heat stroke has some symptoms that may be confusing. For example, decreased sweating seems like it should mean a person is struggling less and cooling down yet it is a sign of great distress. Be aware a heat stroke victim will not have all of these symptoms but rather a combination of a few.

What to do?

If you suspect heat stroke or if you are unsure call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number immediately. Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the body. Immerse victim in a cool bath, not cold, or wrap wet sheets around the body and fan your victim. Watch for signals of breathing problems. Keep the person lying down and continue to cool the body any way you

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can. If the victim refuses water, is vomiting, or there are changes in the level of consciousness, do not give anything to eat or drink. If they are conscious and willing you may give small sips of water or let them suck water from a wet, clean towel or new sponge.

The sun is the next big challenge when keeping summers safe. Sunburns not only hurt now but cause damage that can result in big health concerns later. We hear so many contradicting opinions on sun protection that you really need to be careful and prayerful as you deal with this issue in your family.

One thing that is universally endorsed is removing yourself and others from direct sun. When camping, lounging on the beach or playing in your own yard provide shade. The problem is we often underplan for time in the sun.

Consider a day at the beach. You pack a beach umbrella, maybe even two, but is that enough? Can your entire group all sit and be shaded at the same time, including the kids building sand castles? Would a couple dining tables or four or five umbrellas be the better choice?

This same principle applies at home. Is your play area or pool in the shade morning and afternoon or should you be creating shade at some times of the day? We don't often think to use a shade sail or patio umbrella to shade the pool. Sun reflecting off the water increases the likelihood of a severe burn.

A few years ago we attended a HAM radio field day. This is a day when amateur radio operators around the world set up their stations and compete to see how many contacts they can make in a 48 hour period. We set up under our pop up canopy but as the day progressed the sun invaded the side of our set up and half the area was in the sun. I quickly grabbed a blanket from the truck and using safety pins, folded the blanket over the bars and created shade. The lesson, be prepared to create new shade as the sun moves.

There are other protections from the sun. Hats are a must when spending time in the sun. Wide brims are the best and there are great styles for both men and women. For your 120 hour kit and auto kits be sure to include baseball caps or cloth wide brim hats that can be folded flat.

Sun block clothing is also a great option. This clothing can provide UPF 50 and above and relieves you of the challenge of keeping sun screens applied.

Finally we need to discuss sun screens. There is controversy surrounding this method of prevention but the best advice and most agreed upon advice is to use them. Sun screens do contain chemicals which are absorbed by the skin. For this reason do not wear sunscreen if you are going to be in the sun for just a short time. It is also important to avoid sunscreen when in the sun briefly because they block the absorption of vitamin D which is essential for

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bone growth and strength, reduces inflammation, supports the immune system, and strengthens the muscles. Most adults have low vitamin D counts.

When spending hours in the sun apply sunscreen thirty minutes before going out giving it time to absorb. If this time is not spent your protection may be sweated off before becoming effective.

Experts tell us SPF 50 is the most protection required. SPFs over this do not provide added protection, they just cost more.

The sun can be your summer enemy but with a little planning it can also be a great friend. Prepare now and enjoy a safe and fun summer with no regrets.