

## **HOW TO AVOID HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES...**

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Summer seems to have come early this year, especially in the Northeast. This has been compounded by drought conditions in our part of the country. *Heat-related illnesses* can be serious. Anyone can get heatstroke, but certain individuals are at increased risk for this most severe form of heat-related illness. Those who are most at risk include the elderly; individuals who are overweight; those taking certain medications; and those exercising or working outdoors on a hot day. Here are some simple tips to help avoid heat-related illnesses:

### **Drink plenty of water**

Drink plenty of fluids both before going out into the heat and then frequently throughout the day. Avoid drinking alcohol, which can cause dehydration. During heavy exercise or effort in a hot environment, most people should drink 2-4 glasses of cool water each hour. Water is better than sports drinks at keeping your body hydrated. DO NOT take salt tablets.

### **Get your body used to the heat**

Try to gradually expose yourself to longer and longer periods in the heat over the course of several days. This will give your body time to adjust.

### **Stay in the shade**

When possible, stay in the shade. Wearing a wide-brimmed hat also provides shade.

### **Wear the right clothes**

Light-colored clothing helps reflect heat away from your body. It also allows you to more easily recognize the presence of another heat-related threat, ticks and other insects. Apply sunscreen about 30 minutes before going outdoors. Apply appropriate insect repellent to reduce your risk from insects. Long-sleeved shirts and long pants also afford protection against poison ivy that grows at this time of year.

### **Know the weather forecast**

Find out what the weather will be like so you are prepared for it.

### **Listen to your body**

Your body often gives you clues when things are not right. Some symptoms that tell you a *heat-related illness* is developing are weakness, dizziness, nausea, headache, and dry mouth. If you feel any of these symptoms coming on, get out of the heat, drink lots of water, and notify your supervisor who will assist you in obtaining medical attention. Certain medications can make such symptoms worse. These include those used to treat high blood pressure, depression, and allergies. With the hot dry weather of late, spore counts of pollens and other allergens are at very high levels. So, be extra diligent in understanding possible side effects of allergy medicines, whether they are prescribed or taken over the counter.

### **Stay cool**

If possible, take breaks in a cool area such as under a tree, the shade of a building, or in an air-conditioned place.

By using the suggestions above, you can help reduce your risk of *heat-related illnesses*. In this especially hot and dry season, this is your best defense against developing potentially serious heat-related conditions. Stay cool, stay healthy, and stay safe. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact us at Best Med Consultants.