



Summer Safety – Summer Fun May 2015

*This alert updates Summer Safety 2014 and
Heat Dangers-Preventing of Heat Related Illness and Death 2014.*

Memorial Day Weekend traditionally marks the start of summer fun. Below are some reminders to ensure everyone is safe and healthy while enjoying the numerous activities that the summer weather allows. These tips provide general guidance to prevent risk associated with summer conditions. It is also important to provide care specific to each individual based on their individualized needs and circumstances.

Sun Safety

RISKS: Too much sun is unhealthy. It can cause sunburn to skin in as little as 15 minutes and increases the long term risk of skin cancer and eye damage. Even on hazy or cloudy days, the sun's rays can cause damaging sunburn.

PROTECTIONS FOR SUN EXPOSURE:

- Avoid direct exposure to the sun. Remain in the shade whenever possible.
- Use a broad spectrum sunscreen with UVA/UVB protection of 30 SPF or greater. Apply at least 30 minutes before sun exposure. Reapply frequently throughout the day (every 2^o and more frequently when swimming/active). Don't forget the ears, feet, hands and neck. Protect the lips with lip balm with SPF 15 or more.
- Wear UV protective sunglasses and a hat to protect eyes, ears and head.
- Avoid being in the sun when the sun's rays are strongest, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
- Some medications cause people to be very sensitive to the sun exposure. Know who takes medications which cause sun-sensitivity and take precautions identified above and/or according to their individualized plan.
- Do your best to encourage sun safety when individuals will be participating in activities without agency staff supervision by providing protective supplies and clothing (e.g. camp, family visits).
- If an individual appears to have sunburn, contact the RN for guidance (certified setting). If blistering is apparent, contact the physician.
- Additional information about protection from sun exposure is available from the American Cancer Society through the following link:
<http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancercauses/sunanduvexposure/skincancerpreventionandearlydetection/skin-cancer-prevention-and-early-detection-u-v-protection>

Prevent Heat-Related Illnesses

RISKS: People suffer heat-related illness when their bodies are unable to cool down, especially in high temperatures and high humidity. This can make people seriously ill at times resulting in death.

PRECAUTIONS: Heat related illnesses and deaths are preventable

- **Agencies should activate heat-related plans of action when external temperatures reach 80°F, and continue with implementation as temperatures rise.**
- Individualized plans may also be needed for people at greater risk and with specialized needs.
- Training should be provided to staff in the prevention and recognition of heat-related illnesses.
- Be aware of outdoor temperatures and modify or reschedule outdoor activities accordingly.
- Provide activities in air conditioned areas when possible and stay in the shade when outdoors.
- Encourage hydration by drinking of plenty of water/caffeine free fluids and water rich foods.
 - If a person requires physician-ordered fluid limitations, work through the RN and the physician to determine how to assist the person in hot weather.
- Provide well-balanced, light, and regular meals.
- Wear loose fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothing.
- Help keep homes/buildings cool. Close windows and use window coverings (blinds, shades, drapes)
- Be aware that fans alone do not provide cooling—they only move hot air around.
- **Vehicles:** Temperatures inside a parked vehicle can rapidly rise to a dangerous level. In only 10 minutes, the temperature can rise 19° F, with heat increasing as more time elapses.
 - Do not leave individuals in a vehicle, even with windows down, no matter how brief.
 - Establish a routine to be sure all occupants leave the vehicle when unloading. Check each seat for sleeping/reclining individuals.

TYPES OF HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES:

Heat Exhaustion – a milder form of heat-related illness. Signs and symptoms include:

- Heavy sweating, paleness, skin may feel cool;
- Muscle cramps, fatigue, weakness;
- Dizziness, headache, fainting, nausea or vomiting; and
- Pulse rate may be fast and weak, and breathing may be fast and shallow.

Heat Stroke – This is a **medical emergency**. When a person's body temperature rises to a dangerous level, it can lead to vital organ damage and death. Signs and symptoms include:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103 °F);
- Red, hot, dry skin and absence of sweating; and
- Rapid, strong pulse rate, throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea or vomiting.

IMMEDIATE STEPS TO TAKE:

- **Contact Emergency Medical Services (EMS) immediately** if heat stroke is suspected or a person is exhibiting extreme symptoms of heat exhaustion.
- Get the person to a cool, shady area, and attempt to cool them down with cool water applied to the skin. Monitor body temperature, if possible.
- Give fluids if person is alert and able to swallow.
- Seek medical follow-up for milder heat-related illness as soon as possible.

For more information, please visit: www.health.ny.gov/publications/1243/ and <http://noheatstroke.org/>

Food Safety: Avoid Food Poisoning

RISKS: The USDA warns that food-borne illness (food poisoning) increases in summer months. Heat and humidity can cause harmful bacteria to quickly multiply on food. When this happens, someone eating the food can get sick.

PREVENTION: Follow these simple steps to safer food during summertime picnics and cookouts:

- **Wash hands often:** Have moist disposable towelettes handy to clean hands of staff and individuals.
- **Keep surfaces clean:** Unclean or contaminated surfaces are a prime cause of food-borne illness. Consider carrying soap and water or disinfectant cleaning wipes to use on surfaces when outside or at remote sites.
- **Separate and cook.** Keep raw meat juices away from ready-to-eat food. Cook meat thoroughly to kill bacteria. Use clean uncontaminated utensils and dishes for serving food.
- **CHILL.** Keep cold foods cold. Food left unrefrigerated for more than two hours may not be safe to eat. When the temperature is above 90 °F, food should not be left out for more than one hour. **If you have any doubts, throw it out.**
- **Refer to the helpful information from the FDA at the following link:**
<http://www.fda.gov/food/resourcesforyou/Consumers/ucm109899.htm>

Protect against Summertime Insects

RISKS: Insects such as mosquitoes and ticks can carry diseases and their bites are irritating and uncomfortable. Some individuals are severely allergic to insect bites, especially bee & wasp stings.

PROTECTIONS: If you will be out at night or hiking in tall grasses or wooded areas, use an insect repellent and check skin and clothing for the presence of ticks. Seek medical attention if you/ person you support is bitten by a tick. If you/someone is allergic to any insect bites, remember to carry an allergy kit per their physician's recommendation.

Safe Practice Near Water & During Water Sports

RISKS: Wherever there is water, there is a risk of drowning. Drowning can occur in seconds. The following factors can contribute to a drowning accident:

- A medical condition such as a seizure disorder;
- A medical emergency while in the water, such as a heart attack, stroke or cramping;
- Use of alcohol or drugs, even prescribed medications; and
- Water conditions, including calm or rough waves, temperature, clarity or hidden objects.

PROTECTIONS: Always provide adequate supervision and these simple precautions to save lives!

- Know the supervision and support equipment needs of the individual during water activities.
- Swim in familiar waters where lifeguards are present. Observe all rules of the swimming area.
- Be responsive to and anticipate changing conditions. If a storm is approaching, get out of the water.
- Always wear a Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD) when boating. PFDs must be properly sized and maintained to be effective.
- Call/Signal for help at the first sign of trouble
- **Direct Support Professionals** must maintain visual contact at all times with the individuals for whom they are responsible.
- Review [Important Information about Drowning](#) alert (February 2011) available on the OPWDD website.

Grill Safety: The Key to Successful Cook-Outs

Enjoy the outdoor grilling that summer allows but be sure you are doing it safely and with safe equipment. Please refer to the comprehensive guidance included in OPWDD's [Grill Safety Alert](#) of May 2014.