

HEALTHY DOSE

health hints from Hillsboro Community Hospital



August is here and the heat appears to be on full blast. Here are some guidelines to keeping safe this summer (taken from Safety Daily Advisor, Chris Kilbourne)

Heat rash: Uncomfortable, but not dangerous. Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing, and take a cool shower after overheating.

Heat stress: This common reaction to high temperatures, especially when accompanied by strenuous activity, can result in thirst, tiredness, dizziness, and even difficulty seeing. Such symptoms suggest it's time to take a break out of the sun and drink some cool water or fruit juice. This should prevent the possibility of fainting that extreme heat may cause.

Heat cramps: These painful muscle spasms in the arms, legs, or intestines are caused by losing salt while sweating. Cooling down and drinking some water/juice is again the remedy. Make sure your summer diet includes foods that will replace lost salt to prevent a recurrence.

Heat exhaustion: A person suffering from this common response to strenuous activity in the heat is likely to feel weak and possibly dizzy and/or nauseous. Symptoms include chills, clammy skin, and profuse sweating. The remedy is cooling off, preferably with your feet slightly elevated, and drinking water/juice. This is a more serious reaction than heat stress, so consider extra rest and extra fluids for a few days.

Heat stroke: This is the one to be scared of! This is life threatening, and demands some attention! Great care should be taken before the effects of heat reach this stage. The symptoms are:

- Hot and dry skin. The victim is unable to produce perspiration anymore.
- Poor coordination and confused behavior. This may be followed by collapse.

The immediate response is to get medical attention. Call 9-1-1. While waiting for help to arrive, cool down the victim with cool things--like ice packs, cool drink cans, whatever, or immerse in cool water. Offer cool water only if the victim is conscious.

Stay healthy, stay cool!

