

## As the Weather heats up, Look out for Heat-Induced Illness

Extremely high or unusually hot temperatures can affect your health. On average, more than 600 deaths from extreme heat events occur each year in the United States. **Most vulnerable are the elderly, those who work or exercise outdoors, athletes, infants and children, the homeless or poor, and people with a chronic medical condition.** While the body normally cools itself by sweating, during cases of extreme heat this might not be enough. In these cases, a person's rises faster than it can cool itself down, which can cause damage to the brain and other vital organs. Please keep in mind that there are several other risk factors as well that may increase your risk of a heat related illness, they are:

- High humidity
- Obesity
- Fever
- Dehydration
- Prescription drug use
- Heart disease
- Poor circulation
- Alcohol use



Take the necessary precautions to prevent serious health effects such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

### **Stay cool**

- Stay in air-conditioned buildings.
- Contact the Kent County Emergency Management Division at 302-735-2200 to locate an air-conditioned shelter in your area.
- Use the buddy system, when working in the heat, monitor the condition of co-workers and have someone do the same for you, heat-induced illness can cause a person to become confused or lose consciousness.
- Do not rely on a fan as your primary cooling device. Fans are not effective if temps are in the high 90's
- Limit outdoor activity, especially midday when it is the hottest part of the day, and avoid direct sunlight.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Take cool showers or baths to lower your body temperature if you can't move to an air conditioned building.
- Check on at-risk friends, family and neighbors at least twice a day.
- Check on infants and small children frequently.

### **Stay hydrated**

- Drink more than usual and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink.
- Drink from two to four cups of water every hour while working or exercising outside.
- Avoid alcohol or liquids containing high amounts of sugar.
- Make sure your family, friends and neighbors are drinking enough water.

- Heavy sweating removes salt and minerals from your body. A sports drink can replace those minerals that you lose in sweat.

### **Stay informed**

- Check your local news for extreme heat warnings and safety tips.
- Keep your friends, family and neighbors aware of weather and heat safety information.
- Remember to check back seats and never leave children or pets in unattended vehicles, even if they are running!

Additionally, the Kent County Emergency Medical Services Division encourages all residents to learn the signs and first aid response for heat-related illness. Warning signs and symptoms vary but may include:

### **Heat Exhaustion**

#### ***Symptoms***

- Heavy sweating
- Weakness
- Skin cold, pale, and clammy
- Weak pulse
- Fainting and vomiting

### **Heat Stroke**

#### ***Symptoms***

- High body temperature (above 103°F)
- Hot, red, dry or moist skin
- Rapid and strong pulse
- Possible unconsciousness

#### ***What You Should Do***

- Move to a cooler location.
- Lie down and loosen your clothing.
- Apply cool, wet cloths to as much of your body as possible.
- Sip water.
- If you have vomited and it continues, seek medical attention immediately.

#### ***What You Should Do***

- Call 911 immediately — this is a medical emergency.
- Move the person to a cooler environment.
- Reduce the person's body temperature with cool cloths or even a bath.
- Do NOT give fluids

# Safety Matters

Provided by: Strategic Insurance Partners

## Vision Care: UV Protection

The sun releases energy, called radiation, in various forms: in the sunlight you see, the heat you feel and the invisible ultraviolet (UV) rays that cause sunburn. UV rays from the sun can also damage your eyes and hurt your vision.

### Dangers of UV Rays

There are two types of UV radiation: UVA rays and UVB rays. UVB rays are more likely to cause sunburn, but UVA rays penetrate deeper. Exposure to either can damage your eyes. Long-term exposure to UV rays can result in eye problems that may lead to vision loss from conditions like cataracts or macular degeneration. Other dangers include skin cancer (around the eyelids) and corneal sunburn. Long hours at the beach or ski slope without proper eye protection can cause corneal sunburn, which can be very painful and may cause temporary vision loss.

### Exposure Risk Factors

Everyone is at risk for eye damage from UV radiation. The risk of sun-related eye problems, however, is higher for people who:

- Spend long hours in the sun
- Have had cataract surgery or have certain retina disorders
- Are on certain medications, such as tetracycline, sulfa drugs, birth control pills, diuretics and tranquilizers that increase the eye's sensitivity to light

### Proper Eye Protection

Adequately protecting your eyes from the sun, and other elements like wind or water, is crucial to maintaining your vision and eye health.

- Use everyday eyewear that absorbs UV rays. All types of eyewear, including prescription and nonprescription glasses, contact lenses and lens implants, should absorb UVA and UVB rays. For UV protection in everyday eyewear, there are several options like UV-blocking lens materials, coatings and photochromic lenses.
- Select the right sunglasses. Sunglasses help in two important ways: they filter light, and they protect the eyes from damaging UV rays. Look for labels that state they block 99%-100% of UVA and UVB rays. They should also reduce glare, protect your entire eye area, be comfortable to wear and don't distort color. Be aware that if you are at the beach or on the ski slope, you should wear sunglasses with a darker tint to block more light. Your risk of eye damage from the sun is greater because of reflection off the water and snow.
- Wear a brimmed hat or cap. A wide-brimmed hat or cap will block about half of UV rays, and also limit UV rays that hit the eyes from above or around glasses.

