



# Handling the Heat

L.A. County Fire's Monthly Public Education Campaign

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The dog days of summer in the Los Angeles area can sometimes be hard to handle. Children and the elderly are the most at risk during the hottest days. Making simple changes in everyday activities is your best defense against heat-related illness. The Los Angeles County Fire Department has come up with some helpful tips on how to stay healthy this summer.

## How to Protect Against Heat Injuries

Here are a few tips on how to protect yourself when temperatures rise:

- **Drink plenty of fluids** – Drink 2 to 4 glasses of water every hour during times of extreme heat
- **Replace Salt and Minerals** – Sweating removes salt and minerals from your body. The best way to replenish these nutrients are to drink fruit juice or sports drinks during exercise or when working outside..
- **Wear appropriate clothing and sunscreen** – Wear lightweight, light colored, and loose fitting clothing. Make sure to apply sunscreen. Sunburns affect the ability for the body to cool itself and also cause a loss of body fluids. When selecting sunscreen choose one with an SPF of 15 or higher.
- **Pace yourself**– If you are not accustomed to working or exercising in hot weather, start off slowly and pick up the pace gradually.
- **Stay cool indoors** – Stay in an air-conditioned area during peak hours. If you do not have air conditioning, consider visiting a shopping mall or public library for a few hours in order to stay cool during the hottest hours of the day.
- **Schedule Outdoor activities after peak hours** – If you must be outside, plan your activities either before noon or in the evening when the temperatures are cooler. If you must be out during peak hours make sure to rest frequently in a shady area.
- **Monitor those at high risk** – Individuals who are the highest risk of heat-related illnesses are infants and children up to four years of age, people who overexert during work or exercise (i.e., construction workers, etc.), and people 65 years of age or older.
- **Keep pets indoors** – The heat also affects our pets; if possible, bring all pets indoors. If pets cannot be brought inside, make sure they have plenty of water and a shaded area to help them stay cool.



## Warning Signs

If you see any of the following signs, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency. Have someone call for immediate medical assistance while you begin cooling the victim:

Warning Signs of *Heat Stroke* vary, but may include:

- \* An extremely high body temperature (103 °F)
- \* Unconsciousness
- \* Dizziness, nausea, and confusion
- \* Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
- \* Rapid, strong pulse
- \* Throbbing headache

Warning signs of *Heat Exhaustion* vary, but may include:

- \* Heavy sweating
- \* Muscle cramps
- \* Weakness
- \* Headaches
- \* Nausea or vomiting; and
- \* Paleness, tiredness, dizziness



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