

## Staying Cool and Hydrated on Hot Summer Days

The summer season is upon us and it's time to think about preventing dehydration and heat-related illness. Although the country is mostly 'hot' except for two to three months yearly, people who get used to the weather must still be aware of the dangers of the summer season.

While everyone may complain of the blazing hot days of summer, there are groups of people more vulnerable to suffer from dehydration and heat-related illness during this season. Extra care therefore is required for these groups.

**Children:** When summer vacation from school arrives, most children spend a great deal of time outdoors being active. Because children have a larger surface area in relation to body mass, they often gain heat faster than adults when the outside air temperature is higher than body temperature. For children, a schedule should be followed on when they should take in some liquid.



**Athletes and exercisers:** People who spend hours training and competing in the hot summer sun often do not have an adequate intake of fluids to make up for the loss of fluids caused by their activities. Some formulated drinks for athletes contain essential sodium and minerals to help athletes fight excessive heat during the season. It is advisable for this group to take in more than their usual intake of clear liquids while training. Regular jogging at the park is important. It must not be discontinued with the weather allowing. If it is extremely hot even in late afternoon, or if there is a sandstorm, it is advisable not to venture outside.

**Outdoor workers:** Workers such as landscapers, construction crews, police officers, and others who spend most of their days in the heat often have little time for bathroom breaks or for drinking fluids, as a result these workers may not consume enough fluids during their workdays. This is dangerous as they may suffer not only from dehydration but also from heat stroke. It is advisable that they bring bottled water with them and cool off when needed by retreating to a shaded area.

**Elderly people:** There is a fine line between how heat affects most adults and how it can affect the elderly in a more profound way. It's extremely important for senior citizens to practice a gradual acclimatization to heat that puts emphasis on hydration.

### Drinking for Hydration

The best time to consume fluids is before you are thirsty -- by the time you are thirsty, your body is already dehydrated. It's best to drink on a schedule when it is hot outside. Avoid drinks containing caffeine while in the sun or heat. These types of drinks stimulate the production of urine thereby promoting dehydration. The best drink still is water.

### Signs and Symptoms of Dehydration

- Dry lips and tongue
- Headache
- Weakness, dizziness, or extreme fatigue
- Concentrated urine that appears darker than normal
- Nausea
- Muscle cramps.

### Protecting yourself from the heat

The allure of the beach in the summer season should make you better aware of the dangers of the summer heat, especially for children. If going outdoors during the day is unavoidable; it is advisable to follow these practical tips to protect you from extreme summer heat:

- wear light & loose clothing, preferably 100% cotton
- use sunscreen lotions (Factor 30 minimum)
- avoid direct sunlight, especially between 10am to 3pm
- wear a hat or cap when possible
- bring a bottled water with you



When swimming at the beach, avoid staying under the sun for too long. Put on sunscreen lotion liberally, and do so after every two hours. Do not forget to bring calamine lotion in case your children suffer from sunburns.

Most important, however, is for you to enjoy the summer season. While most of us may go to cooler places elsewhere, it is best to understand the dangers pose by the summer heat. Now that you know what to do and avoid, go and enjoy the summer!

If you want more information on how to protect yourself and your family this summer, visit [bupa.com.sa](http://bupa.com.sa) or call our Doctor on Phone helpline: **800 440 4040**.

(This fact sheet is intended for general information only and does not replace the need for personal advice from your doctor)