

## SOME COOL TIPS TO BEAT THE HEAT

With temperatures in the region expected to reach record highs, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Alexandria Health Department are urging residents to take precautions against heat-related illnesses by following these tips to keep cool in hot weather:

- **Drink plenty of fluids.** When working outside, drink fruit juice or a sports beverage during exercise to replace fluids, salt and minerals lost from sweating. If you're on diuretics or a fluid-restricted or low-salt diet, ask your doctor. Drink often and in reasonable amounts, and don't wait until you're thirsty (your body needs more fluid than thirst will indicate). Avoid alcohol and caffeinated beverages.
- **Watch what you eat and monitor your salt intake.** Avoid hot and heavy meals – they add heat to your body.
- **Plan outdoor activities around the heat.** If you must go outside, do so in the morning or at night when it's cooler. Resting frequently when you are outside will give your body a chance to recover from heat.
- **Avoid exposure to the sun** – sunburn limits your body's ability to keep cool and causes loss of body fluids. If you must go outside, avoid sunburn and wear light clothing. Use sunscreen (apply it indoors before going outside) and wear a hat.
- **Limit physical activity** until your body adjusts to the heat.
- **Do not keep children or pets in cars with windows rolled up.** Temperatures inside a car with closed (or even partially opened) windows can reach up to 150 degrees quickly, resulting in heat stroke or death.
- **If you must work outside, use the “buddy system.”** Heat-related illnesses can cause confusion. Therefore, make sure someone else knows of your plans.
- Relatives and friends should **check on elderly family or neighbors** throughout the day during heat waves.
- **If you don't have air conditioning,** go to the shopping mall, recreation center or public library – even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat. To find a recreation center near you, visit [www.alexandriava.gov/RecreationCenters](http://www.alexandriava.gov/RecreationCenters).
- **Cool baths and showers** (water temperature around 75°F) provide surprising relief from the heat much faster than cool air.

- **As always, if you feel that you are having a medical emergency, please dial 911.**

The Alexandria Health Department also recommends the following websites to help educate and protect you and your family during extreme weather:

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention –  
<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/ExtremeHeat>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency –  
[www.epa.gov/naturalevents/extremeheat.html](http://www.epa.gov/naturalevents/extremeheat.html)

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