

Ways to avoid heat stroke

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Having some fun in the sun is typically a popular summer activity, but it can also be dangerous.

The University of Alabama's Dr. Anne Halli-Tierney offers a few tips on how to enjoy the summer sun and stay safe.

- Be aware of the symptoms of [heat stroke](#) after being in a hot, humid environment. These can include confusion, lightheadedness or fainting, dry, red (flushed) and warm skin, a body temperature of 104 degrees Fahrenheit or greater, fast heartbeat and breathing, and muscle cramps. If these symptoms are present following exposure to a hot environment, seek medical assistance promptly.
- If symptoms such as [muscle cramps](#), dizziness and thirst occur after being in a hot environment, this could be indicative of [heat exhaustion](#) (the precursor to heat stroke). Be sure to move to a cooler location, or apply ice packs to the neck or underarms. Drink nonalcoholic and noncaffeinated fluids such as water or sports drinks.
- To avoid heat exhaustion or heat stroke, try to stay indoors between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. when the sun is hottest. Try not to exercise outside during the heat, if possible; if you must exercise during the heat, be sure to drink plenty of fluids before, during and after exercise.
- Be sure to check on children and the elderly during hot weather, as they are more vulnerable to the effects of the heat and can develop heat exhaustion and heat stroke more quickly than other

populations.

- Avoid too much time in closed cars in the [sun](#) as the heat in a closed car can rise very rapidly and lead to heat stroke. Also, try not to wear layered clothing on hot days; make sure clothing is loose and lightweight.

Halli-Tierney is an assistant professor in the department of family medicine at the College of Community Health Sciences.

Provided by University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa

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