

# **Take a Few Precautions to Avoid Common Warm Weather Injuries**

Too much of a good thing—in this case, hot weather—can lead to dehydration and heat stroke. When it heats up outside, follow these guidelines:

- Drink plenty of water, using your thirst as a guide. If you have children, offer water frequently. They may not ask, even when they're thirsty.
- If you're being active, drink some water before, during, and after your activity.
- Exercise during the cooler parts of the day.
- Avoid beverages that are dehydrating, such as alcohol and coffee.
- Wear a hat with a brim to shade your head.
- Stay indoors or in the shade during the hottest parts of the day.

Watch for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke, including muscle cramps, fever, clammy skin, mental confusion, lightheadedness, and rapid breathing. Anyone with these symptoms should lie down in a cool area, slowly drink a cool liquid, remove clothing, and cool down with a fan or by applying a cool washcloth or cold packs. If there's no improvement, call your physician during office hours.

## **Be Prepared on the Trail**

When heading out for a hike, be sure to fill your backpack with essential supplies. The Washington Trails Association recommends including these items:

- A map of the area you're visiting and a compass.
- Extra food and water, and a way to purify water.
- Rain gear and extra clothing; a Firestarter and matches.
- A knife or multipurpose tool, a flashlight, and extra batteries.
- Sunscreen and sunglasses.
- A well-stocked first-aid kit (prestocked kits are available at many outdoor stores).

Other items to consider: a cell phone, insect repellent, a whistle, an emergency blanket, a mirror for signaling, duct tape, gloves, and extra socks. Be sure you let someone know where you're going, and check weather reports before you leave. If bad weather is predicted, choose another day for your hike.

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