

Health and Welfare Alert



Ohio Administrative Code 5123:2-17-02 requires all developmental disabilities employees to review Health and Welfare Alerts released by the department as part of annual training. All previous alerts are listed on the department's website.

Staying Safe in the Summer #02-6-17

Summer is a great time to be outdoors. Staying healthy to enjoy the season means avoiding summertime health risks such as dehydration, sunburn, heat-related illness, and food poisoning. Additional safety measures for swimming or during summer camp should also be considered for a fun and safe summer.

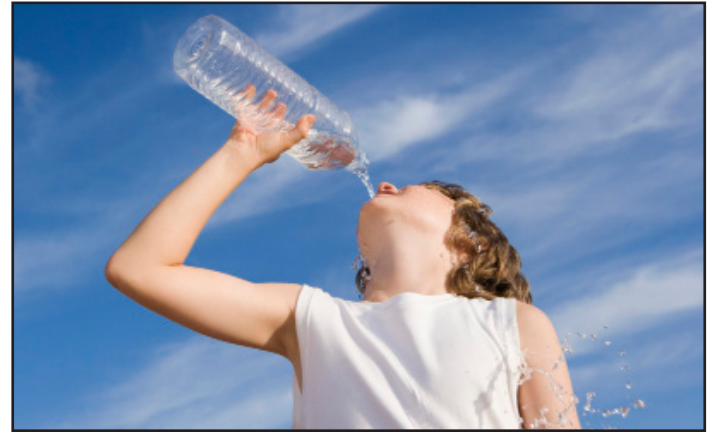
Dehydration

Dehydration is the loss of body fluids and electrolytes due to sweating and inadequate intake of water. Drinking alcohol or caffeine, such as coffee, tea, or pop, can make someone dehydrated.

Some signs include:

- Heat exhaustion
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting
- Blurred vision
- Confusion
- Decreased urine output or urine that is concentrated and appears dark
- Sunken eyes
- Wrinkled or saggy skin, decreased skin-elasticity
- Extreme dryness in the mouth
- Fever or temperature higher than 102 degrees
- Severe pain or blistering of skin

If dehydration is suspected, **rehydration** is the key to preventing further complications. Remember to drink at least eight glasses of water per day.



Food Poisoning and Grill Safety

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, **1 in 6** Americans (or 48 million people) becomes ill from foodborne diseases and **3,000** die each year.

- Refrigerate all food; don't let it sit in sun
- Two-hour rule: Discard food that has been left out of a refrigerator or well-chilled ice chest longer than two hours
- Always wash hands before eating
- Ensure food is served on clean plates, and use clean utensils
- Cover food to keep away insects
- Remember: "When in doubt, throw it out"

Outdoor grills can result in burns without proper safety and supervision.

- Check grills for proper working order
- Supervise people closely who are grilling or near fire pits
- Be sure gas grill lid is open before lighting
- Don't squeeze extra fire starter on coals that are already burning

Heat-Related Illnesses

- Sun stroke or heat stroke is a serious life-threatening condition when the body is exposed to hot temperatures for long periods of time
- If sun or heat stroke is suspected, seek medical attention immediately

Sun Safety

Sunburn is a painful skin condition, which occurs as a result of over-exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays.

Risk of sunburn is higher for people with fair skin, blue eyes, and red or blonde hair. People with darker skin tones can also burn.

Taking certain medications or having already compromised skin also increase the risks.

To prevent sunburn

- Avoid the sun between 10 AM and 4 PM
- Wear a hat, especially if hair is thin on top of head
- Reapply sunscreen every two to three hours, or more if swimming
- Remember sunburns can happen on cloudy days
- Use sunscreen with SPF15 or higher 30 minutes before going outside
- Try to stay in the shade
- Use lip balm including sunscreen
- Put on sunglasses with 100 percent UV protection
- Come out of the sun when first noticing skin is getting pink

Water Safety

- Be aware of each person's ability and needs in swimming pools, rivers, or the ocean
- Assess staff's capabilities to respond to water safety needs
- Do not chew gum or eat while swimming, as it is a choking risk
- Always designate someone as a life guard to watch for problems
- Use life jackets or other flotation devices, as needed
- Wait to digest meals before swimming
- Avoid the "Dangerous TOO's": too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, or too much strenuous activity

Summer Camp Safety

Proper planning for summer camp is critical for the safety of people with developmental disabilities.

- Be familiar with the camp, supervisors, and possible risks
- Be comfortable with camp activities and staffing levels
- Be prepared with necessary adaptive supports or communication devices
- Communicate face-to-face with the camp director about any dietary or supervision requirements, medical needs, or behavioral issues
- Provide a written copy of a person's information, such as an individual service plan or behavioral support plan
- Use sunscreen and insect repellent as recommended, as many repellents contain DEET and are toxic
- Be aware of any medications that increase a person's sensitivity to the sun and communicate to camp staff
- If there is a pond, lake, or pool, discuss a person's abilities in the water with the camp director; provide a written copy of any special needs that exist
- Be aware of how camp activities match with a person's physical or health needs

Hot Car Safety

It is dangerous to leave people unattended in vehicles during the summer months.

It can lead to dehydration, heat stroke, or death.

- Never leave someone alone in a hot vehicle for any period of time
- It only takes a few minutes for someone to be at risk, as core body temperatures rise quickly
- Keep the air conditioning on or windows open
- Consider health care concerns of seniors and those with respiratory difficulties when planning summer activities