

## Summertime Health and Safety Tips

Working out in hot humid conditions places additional stress on your body's temperature regulation system resulting in a rise in body temperature and an increased risk for heat related problems such as heat cramps, dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

### **Signs and symptoms of heat related illness:**

**Heat Cramps** are painful muscle spasms that can occur when sweating depletes your body of sodium and water. The muscles of the arms, legs and abdomen are most commonly affected.

**Heat Exhaustion** can present with any combination of the following signs and symptoms. Cool, clammy and pale skin, heat cramps, weak pulse, nausea, chills and dizziness, and weakness.

**Heat Stroke** can be life threatening. Your skin becomes hot, flushed and dry. You stop perspiring and your body temperature may rise above 106 F. you may feel faint and confused.

At the first onset of any of the above signs and symptoms get out of the heat, drink cool fluids, run cool water over your head and body, rest and do not resume exercising, seek medical attention if no improvement in your condition occurs.

### **Prevention**

As you plan your outdoor activities keep in mind that young children, older adults and people who take certain medications such as diuretics are at greater risk of heat related illness. People who are at a higher risk for heat related illness need to be watched for signs of heat distress and limit exposure to the heat.

- Drink plenty of fluids; avoid caffeinated and alcohol beverages.
- Wear light-colored, loose fitting clothing made of breathable fabric.
- Plan outdoor exercise for the cooler times of the day (early morning and late evening).
- Wear sunscreen, sunburn decreases your body's ability to cool itself.
- Allow your self time to acclimate to higher temperatures; this could take 5-10 days.

Utilizing a few precautions can help ensure a healthy and safe summer for you and your family.

### **Preventing & Surviving a Summer Heart Attack ♥**

Its summer and time for fun! It's time to go outside and run and play and stroll and jog and picnic and mow the lawn and hike and bike and...Athletes know that

heat can more than *double* the “training effect” they undergo when working out in hot weather. What this means to a lay person is, when you exert yourself in hot weather, it puts a great deal of *stress* on your system. Are you ready for summer? Each summer, emergency personnel respond to a number of heart attack calls from folks overdoing it. Learn to recognize the signals when you’re overtired and be brave enough to **slow down**. The leading cause of death in this nation is cardiovascular disease, which attacks the heart and arteries of the body. Many persons stricken with a heat attack stand an excellent chance of survival if emergency personnel can reach the scene within the first few minutes. The death rate from coronary artery disease has been declining since the 1960s. The incidence of coronary heart disease is much more common in men than in women. However, women’s incidents are currently on the rise.

### **Recognize the Warning Signs**

A person who is experiencing a heart attack or the warning signs of an impending heart attack may have various symptoms. The person who is having the warning signs may experience angina pectoris, a severe chest pain caused by narrowing of the blood vessels in the heart. This pain is a warning sign and should be checked by a doctor. The person who is experiencing a heart attack will often have the following symptoms:

1. Profuse sweating
2. Difficulty breathing
3. Nausea (may vomit)
4. Experience of a premonition of death

### **Quick Response is Vital**

Any person who is having these symptoms should call 9-1-1 or the emergency number in your area to get medical help as rapidly as possible. Emergency medical service should be summoned immediately if a heart attack is suspected. Even a mild attack may suddenly worsen to the point where heart activity and respiration may cease. Resuscitation must begin within minutes if the patient is to survive. Heart attack victims should not be transported by private automobile to seek medical assistance. It is best to dial 9-1-1 for the fastest medical care at the scene. One call will result in a response by firefighters equipped with oxygen and specially trained for such emergencies, plus rescue units and ambulances carrying highly-trained paramedics. Persons suffering a heart attack should not exert themselves in the slightest. They may be most comfortable with the chest slightly elevated. Such patients should have plenty of reassurance and the quietest possible atmosphere.

**Webster Groves Fire Department**