



HEAT/SUN INJURY AND HYDRATION



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Curtis K. Biasi

Don't let your summer time fun be cut short with painful sunburns! Excessive sun exposure can be hazardous to your health due to extreme heat and contact with ultraviolet (UV) rays.^{1,2} Dangerously high temperatures can lead to heat stress which can cause heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, and heat rashes.¹ Extreme heat can also cause dehydration.¹ It is important to note that if you are thirsty, your body is already dehydrated.³

Likewise, UV rays, which are invisible forms of radiation emitted by the sun, can be damaging particularly to your skin.² The three types of UV rays are: ultraviolet A (UVA), which penetrates deep beneath the surface of the skin; ultraviolet B (UVB), which penetrates less deeply into the skin; and ultraviolet C (UVC), which are absorbed by the atmosphere and do not penetrate the skin.² Excessive exposure to UVA and UVB rays can lead to sunburn, premature wrinkling, aging of skin, and skin cancer.²

The risk of sun damage is greatest during the summer months between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.² The threat is increased by some medications which heighten sensitivity to sunlight, as well as snow and beach sand which reflect UV light.²

Prevention Tips

Check out the prevention tips below to ensure your fun in the sun is both safe and healthy.

- ▶ Drink water before, during, and after physical activity.⁴
- ▶ Make hydrating a priority – carry a water bottle to drink on the go.⁴
- ▶ Choose water over sugar-sweetened, caffeinated, or alcoholic drinks.⁴
- ▶ Avoid being outdoors between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. in the summer months.^{4,5}
- ▶ Seek shade to avoid sun exposure.^{2,5}
- ▶ Use sunscreen with at least Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 15 or higher year round.^{2,5}
- ▶ Apply sunscreen liberally 20 minutes before sun exposure.^{2,5}
- ▶ Reapply sunscreen at least every two hours and/or after getting wet or sweating.^{2,5}
- ▶ Cover up with tight weaved dark clothing and wear a wide-brimmed hat to avoid sunburn.²
- ▶ Wear sunglasses that block UVA and UVB rays.^{2,5}

¹ Heat Stress. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/>. Updated 24 June 2014. Accessed March 2015.

² UV Radiation. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/uvradiation/>. Updated 13 August 2014. Accessed March 2015.

³ Hydrate. Fitness, Sports and Deployed Forces Support. Commander Navy Installations Command. http://www.navyfitness.org/nutrition/noffs_fueling_series/hydrate/. Accessed March 2015.

⁴ Keeping Your Cool. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <http://www.cdc.gov/bam/safety/cool.html>. Updated 22 January 2013. Accessed March 2015.

⁵ Sun Proof. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <http://www.cdc.gov/bam/safety/sun.html>. Updated 22 January 2013. Accessed March 2015.

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