



Keeping Cool When it's HOT

Temperatures in Riverside County can jump to over 100 degrees during this time of the year. Desert areas face even higher temperatures. It's during these times of extreme heat when children are most vulnerable and prone to heat stress. Take the following precautions when caring for young children to avoid heat-related illnesses and injuries.

Stay Cool Indoors

Stay indoors and, if at all possible, stay in an air-conditioned place. Electric fans may provide comfort, but when the temperature is in the high 90s, fans will not prevent heat-related illness. Taking a cool shower or bath or moving to an air-conditioned place is a much better way to cool off. Use your stove and oven less to maintain a cooler temperature in your home.

People with the following symptoms should try to remain in a cool place and drink water to prevent dehydration:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Weakness or muscle pains
- Nausea and vomiting

If your home does not have air conditioning, go to the shopping mall, public library or cool center—even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat.

Cool centers are located throughout Riverside County and provide snacks and water, in addition to activities and resource information. They are open during the week. Residents should check with their local cool center for weekend hours. For more information or for a list of cool center locations, call (888) 636-8676 or visit www.rivcohealthdata.org. Speech or hearing impaired individuals may call TTY (951) 955-5126.

Be Sun Smart

A young child's skin is sensitive to the bright summer sun so be sure to avoid sunburns.

- Apply sunscreen with at least 30 SPF (sun protection factor) on your child's skin 15 minutes before going outside and apply again every two hours - especially right after your child has been in water or is sweating.
- Encourage children to play in the shade as much as possible, especially during peak sun hours between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Make sure your child wears lightweight clothing, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses that offer 100 percent UV (ultraviolet) protection.
- Keep babies younger than 6 months of age out of direct sunlight.

Fun In The Sun

The intensity of activities that last 15 minutes or more should be reduced whenever high heat and humidity reach critical levels.

- At the beginning of a strenuous exercise program or after traveling to a warmer climate, the intensity and duration of exercise should be limited initially and then gradually increased during a period of 10 to 14 days to accomplish acclimatization to the heat.
- Before prolonged physical activity, the child should be well-hydrated. During the activity, periodic drinking should be enforced, for example, each 20 minutes, 5 oz of cold tap water or a flavored sports drink for a child weighing 90 lbs.
- Clothing should be light-colored and lightweight and limited to one layer of absorbent material to facilitate evaporation of sweat. Sweat-saturated shirts should be replaced by dry clothing.
- Practices and games played in the heat should be shortened and more frequent water/hydration breaks should be instituted.

Don't Leave Children in Cars

Even in cool temperatures, cars can heat up to dangerous temperatures very quickly. Even with the windows cracked open, interior temperatures can rise almost 20 degrees Fahrenheit within the first 10 minutes. Anyone left inside is at risk for serious heat-related illnesses or even death. Children who are left unattended in parked cars are at greatest risk for heat stroke, and possibly death. When traveling with children, remember to do the following:

- Never leave infants, children or pets in a parked car, even if the windows are cracked open.
- To remind yourself that a child is in the car, keep a stuffed animal in the car seat. When the child is buckled in, place the stuffed animal in the front with the driver.
- When leaving your car, check to be sure everyone is out of the car. Do not overlook any children who have fallen asleep in the car.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics, National Center for Environmental Health-Health Study Branch, First 5 California, Community Action Partnership of Riverside County, Riverside County Department of Public Health