

Sun and Heat Protection

The sun's UV rays can damage your skin in as little as 15 minutes. That's why you need to prepare yourself if you are working outside when it is hot and humid. And you need to be especially careful if you are outside with children in the hot sun.

Here are some simple steps you can take to protect yourself and your team:

Find Shade

Shade protection, like an adjustable umbrella or canopy, can be a great way to deflect the sun's rays.

Wear a Hat

Wearing a hat with a broad brim, and preferably one with neck protection, not only prevents sunburn but can provide important relief from the heat too.

Sunglasses Required

Your eyes can be damaged by UV rays, and if your role involves supervision, glare may prevent you from doing your job. Wearing large sunglasses or wrap-around lenses is actually required for lifeguarding, and all employees who work outdoors during daylight hours. The best sunglass lens options include those with UV protection that should block 99-100% of both UVA and UVB rays and Polarized lenses that reduce glare.

Stay Hydrated

It is important to stay hydrated by drinking water or an electrolyte-replacing beverage like Gatorade. We recommend starting each morning by drinking eight ounces of water to come to work properly hydrated. Drinking soda or carbonated drinks will not help with hydration.

Team Talks are intended to provide ready-to-use content for facilitated safety discussions on key topics. Whether you use this copy as an exact script, or as a set of talking points for creating your own talk, is up to you. We hope it provides a useful starting point for discussion. As always, we would love to hear feedback on how your talk goes, and what more we can do to support you in creating a true culture of safety.

The Redwoods Group

Know the Signs

Knowing what someone looks and behaves like when they are well hydrated—and knowing the warning signs to look for when they are suffering from a heat-related condition—is one of the most important things we can do to protect ourselves and our team. Typically, if a person is well-hydrated, they are feeling well, are alert and when you look in their eyes, they are “present” and able to respond easily to you. Their mouth and tongue is moist, they are able to drink normally and do not complain of being thirsty. When someone is well hydrated, they can pinch the skin on the back of their hand and it springs right back because they have plenty of water in their body.

We all know that during a hot day outside or when there is high activity, that “no signs of dehydration” may change to some or severe dehydration very quickly. This is especially true if the person has not had much to drink in the few days before or are prone to being chronically dehydrated.

The table on the following page shows common symptoms for heat-related illness. Please consider printing this table and handing it out to your staff.

Let’s take a quick true or false quiz on sun and heat protection for review.

Drinking soda is just as effective as water or Gatorade for quenching thirst.

FALSE

Wearing hats, sunglasses and sunscreen can help protect you from the sun.

TRUE

Heat stroke is the most severe form of heat illness and is a life-threatening emergency where 911 should be called immediately.

TRUE

NOTES

Condition

Dehydration

Caused by too little water intake, especially in hot weather or during exercise, dehydration can range from mild to severe.

Prevention

- Drink plenty of water
- Take frequent breaks out of the sun
- Seek shade
- Avoid over exertion

Symptoms

- Little or no urine
- Darker urine
- Dry mouth
- Sleepiness or fatigue
- Extreme thirst
- Headache
- Confusion
- Dizziness
- No tears when crying
- Stomach begins to hurt

Treatment

- Move indoors
- Have sit or lay down on floor if able
- Loosen clothing
- Wet the skin
- Drink plenty of water
- Use a fan
- Seek treatment if vomiting or losing consciousness

Heat Exhaustion

Not usually life threatening, but heat exhaustion can still be extremely distressing and debilitating.

- Stay indoors (air-conditioned if possible)
- Use a fan
- Wear cool clothing
- Seek shade

- Nausea
- Paleness
- Profuse sweating
- Vomiting
- Fainting
- Moderately raised body temperature
- Headache
- Not able to respond to questions quickly

- Move indoors
- Sit or lay down on floor
- Loosen clothing
- Wet the skin
- Drink plenty of water
- Use a fan
- Seek treatment if vomiting or losing consciousness

Heat Stroke

The most severe form of heat-related illness, heatstroke is a life threatening condition.

- Stay indoors
- Use a fan
- Wear cool clothing
- Seek shade

- Usually no sweating (athletes may sweat)
- Skin hot, dry and red
- Seizures
- Severe headache
- Vomiting
- Unconsciousness
- Dizzy/Lightheaded
- Unable to respond to questions
- Unconscious

- Call 911 immediately—this is a life threatening condition
- Move to floor and lay down
- Raise legs over heart if unconscious
- Begin rapid cooling using ice packs under back of neck and armpits. Continue cooling skin with water and have fan directed towards person. Start treatment for shock.

Sunburn

Ranging from uncomfortable to extremely painful, sunburn is always a sign of dangerous over exposure to the sun's rays.

- Apply sunscreen liberally to all areas exposed to the sun 15-30 minutes before going outside
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours
- The sunscreen should provide UVA protection to meet FDA regulation (high SBF 30-50 or highest SBF 50+).
- Wear clothing with special UV protection if you are prone to sunburn
- Remember to put on sunscreen if you take protective clothing off
- Wear loose-fitting clothing and a hat
- Seek shade

- Red skin
- Painful burning
- Headache
- Skin may begin to look pink when you go in the shade
- May begin to feel thirsty and tired after being in the sun for long periods
- Changes in skin color sometimes do not happen for several hours after being in the sun
- Sunburns can be VERY painful

- Move indoors
- Seek shade
- Drink plenty of water
- If blistering, do not pop any blisters and only apply burn specific creams/medications to a burn as directed by your health professional
- Severe sunburn may result in the need to go to health care professional or even the emergency room