

## *July - Heat Exhaustion / Sunstroke:*

### *Newsletter*

*“Jacob’s well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime.” John 4:6 NLT*

The summer sun in moderation is healthy but can become dangerous if the body gets too warm. Excessive activity, exercise, or time in the sun will increase the body’s temperature which makes you sweat in an effort to release that extra heat. Sometimes this response becomes overloaded, shuts down, and causes a potentially life-threatening condition known as heat stroke or sunstroke. Your symptoms can range from clammy skin, dry mouth, fatigue, dizziness, and headaches to an absence of sweating, shallow breathing, confusion, loss of consciousness, and even death.

This rise in body heat can also occur if you participate in an excessive amount of exercise without replacing the body’s fluid. A loss of fluid will occur at a faster rate if your activity is outside in the heat or during times of high humidity. Because of this rapid loss, you will not be aware of your dehydrated state and you will become overheated very quickly. To combat the risk of heat stress or stroke, when exercising or working in a hot environment you must drink 2-4 glasses of water (16 -32 oz) each hour to replace the fluids lost through sweating.

To prevent heat stress or the more serious condition of heat stroke, it is important to know risk factors and tips for prevention. High risk individuals are infants, toddlers, and the elderly as they are not able to control their body’s heat as well as adults. People with disabilities, chronic diseases, certain medications, and working environments in extreme heat are also more susceptible to heat illnesses. Be observant. Decrease the possibility of heat illness by dressing in cool clothing and drinking plenty of fluids without caffeine. Ask your doctor about side effects of your medication, stay in cool places when it is hot and humid, and find shade when working or playing in the heat.

*(Source: Center for Disease Control [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/))*

### *Bulletin Blurbs:*

#### **Week 1 –**

*“For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.” Psalms 32:4 NIV*

During a heat-related illness, the body’s temperature can quickly rise above 103 degrees. To prevent overheating make sure the person stays hydrated, wears loose clothing, avoids the hottest time of the day, avoids caffeinated beverages, and uses air conditioning or fans to cool down. If suffering from heat stroke, a person may display the following: confusion, dizziness, fainting, clammy/pale skin, headache, fatigue, dry mouth, weak pulse, lack of perspiration, or nausea. If heat stroke is suspected, move the person to a cool place and seek medical attention immediately to prevent serious complications.

## **Week 2 –**

*“For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed.” James 1:11 NIV*

Certain risk factors for heat related illnesses will dictate a person’s exposure to the sun’s heat and participation in physical activity. Factors include: age (those elderly or younger than 5), chronic illnesses, obesity, pregnancy, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, respiratory disease, alcohol consumption, athletics, military activity, and outdoor occupations and performances. Some medications such as tranquilizers, antihistamines, antibiotics, antidepressants, beta-blockers, and some sleeping pills also interfere with the body’s cooling mechanisms which put people at risk. Consider your risks before spending much time in the sun.

## **Week 3 –**

*“I cared for you in the desert, in the land of burning heat.” Hosea 13:5 NIV*

In hot weather, it is important to dress appropriately. Babies and young children should be dressed in light weight, loose clothing to allow excess heat to leave their bodies. When gardening or spending time in the hot sun, hats – especially ones with wide brims – are very helpful in keeping one cool. Athletes, band members, or other performers who wear excessive layers, heavy clothing, or some type of uniform run a higher risk of heat exhaustion in the high heat and humidity. To prevent heat related illnesses, pay close attention to the heat, activity, and type of clothing and make sure anyone in risky situations drinks plenty of water.

## **Week 4 –**

*“They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water.” Isaiah 49:10 NIV*

Sunstroke or heat exhaustion can happen quickly and without any warning. It is dangerous for all ages but especially the young and old since their bodies can’t control temperatures as well as other ages. During activity and heat, the body continually loses water as it cools itself but doesn’t register thirst until the stores of fluid have been greatly diminished. Because of this anyone in the heat – runners, construction workers, gardeners, and kids playing – must drink water throughout their activity or work. When thirst finally occurs, it is too late and the body has difficulty ‘catching up.’ So be prepared, drink your water, and avoid a serious heat illness.

## *Programming ideas*

### *Worship*

- » Have lesson on the art of moderation in all that we do
- » Hand out paper fans to congregation as they enter the sanctuary

### *Education*

- » Hold a health fair and include information on summer issues like heat exhaustion and summer safety (food, recreation) issues
- » Prepare safety handouts and give to children/families attending church camps

### *Service*

- » Provide adequate water at church picnics and vacation Bible School
- » Have the youth or small groups from the church provide water and shade at events in the community such as Senior Olympics, county fairs, or any activities taking place in the heat – this could be sponsoring a ‘rest tent’ at the fair or volunteering with the Red Cross or other health organization at an event
- » Provide a site and fluids for ‘heat relief’ at the church on heat alert days

### *References / Resources*

[www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/) - Dept. of Human Services – signs, symptoms, and related sites for heat exhaustion, sunstroke, and occupational heat hazards

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/heatillness.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/heatillness.html) - MedlinePlus, National Institute of Health has FAQ sheets and other handouts

[www.mayoclinic.com/health/first-aid-heat-exhaustion/FA00020](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/first-aid-heat-exhaustion/FA00020) - information from the Mayo Clinic with first aid tips

[www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/heat-exhaustion-000075.htm](http://www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/heat-exhaustion-000075.htm) - University of Maryland Medical Center – includes options for complimentary therapies

[www.uchicagokidshospital.org/online-library/content=P02822](http://www.uchicagokidshospital.org/online-library/content=P02822) – University of Chicago, Comer Children’s Hospital

[www.emedicinehealth.com/heat\\_exhaustion\\_and\\_heat\\_stroke/article\\_em.htm](http://www.emedicinehealth.com/heat_exhaustion_and_heat_stroke/article_em.htm) - HON approved discussion on heat exhaustion and treatment

[www.redcross.org/](http://www.redcross.org/) - American Red Cross – search ‘heat’ and ‘sunstroke’