



Heart-Healthy Tips: Summer Health

When warm weather arrives, people begin making plans to go swimming at the local pool or lake, hike in the woods, cookout with friends, and travel. You can keep your heart and body healthy during the summer while enjoying the outdoors by following some simple yet important health and safety tips. Find more tips and information from the Vermont Department of Health.

Prevent Heat-Related Illness

- ▶ Drink more fluids, regardless of your activity level. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink.
- ▶ Don't drink liquids that contain caffeine, alcohol, or large amounts of sugar as these actually cause you to lose more body fluid.
- ▶ Electric fans may provide comfort, but when the temperature is in the upper 90s or higher, 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.
- ▶ Although anyone at any time can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others, including infants, young children, people age 65 and over, people who have a mental illness, and people with health conditions such as heart disease or high blood pressure.

Keeping Food Safe when Grilling

- ▶ Wash hands with hot, soapy water before and after handling food.
- ▶ Keep food and drinks in separate coolers.
- ▶ Never leave perishable food out of the refrigerator for more than two hours. When the air temperature is above 90°, do not leave food out for more than one hour.
- ▶ Use clean utensils and dishes to serve food. Each dish should have its own serving utensils to avoid cross-contamination.
- ▶ Preheat cooking grills for 20-30 minutes before using.
- ▶ Allow meat to completely thaw in a refrigerator before placing on a grill.
- ▶ Marinate meat in a tightly sealed plastic container or sealable plastic bag, and keep refrigerated until ready to use. Do not reuse marinade.
- ▶ Use a meat thermometer to ensure meats have reached a safe, internal temperature: hamburger-160°; chicken-165°; pork-150°; steak-145°; hot dogs-140°.
- ▶ Serve grilled foods on a clean dish, not a dish used for raw meat.
- ▶ Leftovers should be refrigerated or placed in a cooler within one hour after use.

Staying Protected from the Sun

- ▶ UV rays are weakest before 11 a.m. and after 4 p.m. Plan activities during these times.
- ▶ Skin does not have to feel hot to get burned, so protect yourself even on cloudy days.
- ▶ Wear sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or greater, and apply at least 20 minutes before going outside.
- ▶ Wear UVA/UVB protective sunglasses and a hat.
- ▶ Protect your arms and legs with loose fitting, tightly woven cotton clothing.

Sources: Vermont Department of Health; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Find more health and wellness tips and resources for first responders at www.healthy-firefighter.org.