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Heat safety: simple tips to keep in mind this summer

SOUTH ZONE – It's the first day of summer and Alberta Health Services (AHS) is reminding Albertans to keep heat safety in mind all season long. Though most individuals can manage moderate summer weather without symptoms, even healthy Albertans need to be vigilant about heat safety when temperatures rise. To help you manage when the mercury rises, AHS offers simple tips for a heat-safe summer.

When temperatures are high:

- Consider rescheduling outdoor activities to cooler hours of the day.
- Take frequent breaks from heat, spending time indoors at home, or in cooled public buildings (including malls or indoor pools).
- Drink plenty of water and other non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated beverages to stay hydrated.
- Do not leave any person or pet inside a closed vehicle for any amount of time. Even minutes of high-temperature exposure can be harmful or deadly.
- Apply a sunscreen of at least SPF 30 at least 20 minutes before heading outdoors. Be sure the product blocks both UVA and UVB rays, and reapply frequently (as directed on product label).
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses (with a UVA/UVB CSA-certified seal).
- Wear light-coloured, long-sleeved shirts and pants, and seek shade.
- Monitor yourself and your loved ones for symptoms of heat stroke or exhaustion, including high body temperature, lack of sweat, confusion, fainting, and unconsciousness. Seek medical attention immediately for anyone feeling faint.

Because excessive heat can aggravate underlying medical illness, such as congestive heart failure, and can be dangerous for children and seniors, vigilance is urged for these vulnerable individuals, as well as outdoor workers and those who are socially isolated. Individuals who are socially isolated may not be able to easily seek help, or be able to monitor their own symptoms. Be a good neighbour and check on your vulnerable community members regularly.

Albertans are also reminded to keep an eye out for heat warnings. Heat warnings are issued by Environment Canada and posted online. To find out whether there are any heat warnings in place for your area of Alberta, visit http://weather.gc.ca/warnings/index_e.html?prov=ab.

Visit www.ahs.ca/heat for more information on heat safety, including for vulnerable groups.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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