



BEAT THE HEAT: SUMMER HEAT TIPS

WARNING: SUMMER HEAT IS HERE

Heat is the number one weather-related killer among chronically ill patients, including those on dialysis—more than tornados, floods, and hurricanes, according to Climatecentral.org. According to the Daily Register, “dialysis patients are particularly sensitive to periods of high heat.” It is estimated that between 600 and 1,500 heat-related deaths occur in an average summer in the United States.

What can chronic kidney disease and dialysis patients do to protect themselves? Add questions about living conditions (e.g., air conditioners, fans, etc.) during your assessment to determine the need for a possible social worker referral. This is especially important during heat and weather advisories.

TIPS FOR KEEPING SAFE AND COOL

1. Never sit in your car: Patients should never stay in vehicles when it's hot outside, not even with the windows down. Dialysis patients are at a higher risk for heat-related illness and injury than the general population. Only a few minutes in a hot car can be hazardous. Find a bench or wait inside an air-conditioned building instead of taking the risk of staying in the car. If you are driving, use the air conditioning or roll down the windows.
2. Outdoor fun: Avoid doing any sort of strenuous activity in warm weather. Sometimes patients push themselves to go for a walk, hike or bike ride. These activities should be avoided during the summer heat. Try walking indoors or ride a stationary bike at your local gym.
3. Keep your home cool: When the outside temperature is hot, open your windows, turn on a fan and turn on your air conditioning system.
4. Wash it off and cool down: On sweltering hot days, a simple cold shower or sponge bath may offer relief. Also, brushing your teeth can be quite refreshing and even limit thirst.
5. Feeling thirsty: Dialysis patients could harm themselves by drinking too much fluid. Always ask your nephrologist how much you should drink during hot weather. Also, limit your thirst by avoiding salt, sugar and sports drinks (often high in sodium). Moreover, sucking on a lemon wedge, ice chips, sugar-free sour candy, and eating frozen grapes will help quench thirst.
6. Warning signs of heat exhaustion: If heat exhaustion is not treated, it can turn into a heatstroke. Warning signs of heat exhaustion include heavy sweating, cramps, headache, confusion, nausea or vomiting, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, and fainting. If you experience heat exhaustion, remove any tight or unnecessary clothing, take a cool shower, bath or sponge bath, or wrap yourself in a cold towel.
7. Warning signs of heatstroke: A heatstroke can be fatal. The warning signs of heatstroke include hot, dry skin, very high body temperature, dizziness, nausea, confusion, strange behavior or unconsciousness, rapid pulse or a throbbing headache. If you experience a heat stroke, call 9-1-1.

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For more hints on keeping cool and watching your fluid intake, contact your dialysis staff today.

STAY COOL THIS SUMMER

Summer heat means greater thirst, a challenge to anyone on a fluid-restricted kidney diet. If you are a dialysis or chronic kidney disease (CKD) patient and need to limit your fluid intake, staying cool during the summer can help. Keep liquid intake to a minimum during hot weather with a diet that includes low-salt, thirst-quenching foods and other tips recommended by a renal dietitian.



10 LOW-SODIUM, THIRST-QUENCHING FOODS

1. Chilled fresh fruit or frozen cut-up fruit from your kidney-friendly food list. Try frozen grapes or peach slices, a refreshing cold apple or a handful of chilled berries.
2. Lemon or lime slices, frozen or added to ice water. The tartness from the lemon or lime will help get rid of a dry mouth.
3. Crispy cold vegetables. Try chilled cucumber slices, jicama, carrots, celery or radishes for a low-potassium thirst quencher.
4. Fresh mint. The flavor of mint added to salads, beverages, or other dishes cools your mouth like mint-flavored gum.
5. Caffeine-free soda (7-Up, Ginger ale), homemade lemonade or caffeine-free tea. Caffeinated drinks can cause you to urinate more and make you thirstier.
6. Gelatin. Eat a small spoonful of flavored gelatin because it lasts longer than a mouthful of water. Make double-strength gelatin and eat it as finger food.
7. Chilled low-salt soup. Make a chilled, low-salt, low potassium soup to fill you up and cool you from the inside out.
8. Sour candy. It's not for everyone, but eating sour candy will moisten your mouth almost immediately.
9. Frozen treats from your grocery store. A few suggestions include Minute Maid Soft Frozen Lemonade® (3 ounces of fluid, 70 calories), Fla.Vor.Ice® freezer pops (1.5 ounces, regular or sugar-free) or one of the many Popsicle® products (regular or sugar-free).
10. Flavored ice. Make flavored ice by freezing lemonade, juice or tea in an ice cube tray. Suck or munch on a cube slowly to chase away thirst without drinking.



TIPS FOR THIRST CONTROL

Measure all fluids carefully in a measuring cup. Record your daily fluid intake each time you drink or eat foods that are liquid at room temperature.

- Salty foods make you thirsty. Limit your sodium intake to control thirst.
- Drink beverages ice cold. They will be more refreshing and will quench your thirst.
- Be aware of hidden liquid foods like gelatin, ice, soup, gravy and watermelon. Remember to count food liquid at room temperature as part of your fluid intake.

- Eat cold kidney-friendly fruits between meals.
- When your mouth is dry, rinse it with mouthwash or cold water (be sure to spit it out).
- Spend the hottest part of the day in an air-conditioned room if



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possible. Staying cool will help reduce your thirst. Try wearing a wet bandana around your neck or head if you're out in the heat.

- Take your medications with your mealtime liquids. Some pills are easy to swallow with a spoonful of applesauce or other moist food.
- Slowly sip allowed beverages to savor the liquid. Use a smaller cup or glass.
- If you have diabetes, keep your glucose under control. High blood sugar will increase your thirst.
- If you are on hemodialysis, set your goal to gain no more than 2-4 pounds between treatments or 1-2 pounds per day (or the weight goal established by a dietitian). Remember that two cups of liquid equal one pound of fluid gain.



OTHER COOLING IDEAS

