



Press Release
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Stay Smart in the Summer Sun

Knox County Hospital District Offers Tips to Prevent Heat and UV-Related Illness

KNOX CITY, Texas (August 1, 2025) – As Knox County enters the peak of the summer heat the combination of extreme heat and intense ultraviolet (UV) radiation presents real dangers for residents of all ages. That’s why the Knox County Hospital District is reminding families to take proactive steps to stay safe and healthy through the hottest months of the year.

“This part of Texas may not have the humidity levels seen in other parts of Texas, but we’re no strangers to dangerous heat,” said Cindy Guess-FNP at Knox County Hospital District. “Every summer, we see patients affected by dehydration, heat exhaustion, and skin damage. These are almost always preventable with just a little planning.”

With temperatures regularly topping 100 degrees, it’s easy to underestimate how quickly the heat can affect your body—especially when combined with extended sun exposure. The risks are even greater for older adults, young children, and individuals with heart disease, diabetes, or other chronic conditions.

Recognizing the Warning Signs

Heat-related illnesses can start with something as mild as a headache or fatigue and progress quickly to more serious symptoms.

“People often ignore the early signs,” said Guess. “If you or someone around you experiences nausea, dizziness, rapid heartbeat, or confusion—those are red flags. Don’t push through it. Get to a cooler place, hydrate, and rest.”

In severe cases, heat stroke can set in. If someone becomes disoriented, stops sweating, or loses consciousness, it’s a medical emergency. Call 911 and take immediate steps to lower their body temperature.

Plan Ahead, Stay Cool

The best defense is prevention. Avoid outdoor activities during the hottest hours—typically between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.—when the sun is at its strongest and heat-related issues are more likely to occur.

“If you’re planning yard work or a workout, try to do it early in the morning or after sunset,” said Guess. “And if you have to be outside during peak hours, take frequent breaks in the shade and drink water often.”

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Wearing the right clothing can also make a difference. Choose lightweight, loose-fitting clothes in light colors. Tightly woven fabrics offer better UV protection. Wide-brimmed hats and breathable long sleeves can help shield your skin from the sun's rays without causing overheating.

Protecting Against UV Radiation

While many people think of sunscreen as something you wear at the beach, the sun's UV rays are just as dangerous in everyday settings—gardening, driving, or walking across a parking lot.

"UV rays are invisible, but the damage they cause is very real," explained Guess. "Even on a cloudy day, up to 80% of UV radiation can reach your skin."

That's why sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher should be applied every day—year-round—and reapplied every two hours or after swimming or sweating. Don't forget often-missed areas like ears, the back of the neck, and the tops of your feet.

Sunglasses also play a key role in sun safety. Look for lenses that block 99% to 100% of both UVA and UVB rays. Not only do they reduce glare and improve comfort, they also protect your eyes from long-term damage such as cataracts and sunburned corneas.

"Protecting your eyes is just as important as protecting your skin," said Guess. "Invest in a good pair of sunglasses and wear them whenever you're outside, not just at the pool."

Hydration is Essential

When the body overheats, it cools itself through sweat—which can lead to fluid loss and dehydration. But not all drinks are created equal.

"Water is your best friend in the summer," said Guess. "Avoid caffeinated sodas, coffee, and alcohol if you're spending time outside. They may seem refreshing, but they actually cause your body to lose more fluid."

If you're going to be active for more than an hour in the heat, sports drinks can help replenish lost electrolytes. But for most people, plain water every 20–30 minutes is enough to stay hydrated and avoid fatigue, cramps, and dizziness.

Take Care of the Vulnerable

Children, seniors, and pets are especially vulnerable to summer heat. Never leave anyone in a parked

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vehicle, even for a minute. Temperatures inside a car can rise by 20 degrees in just 10 minutes—even with the windows cracked.

“Kids and pets can’t always speak up for themselves,” said Guess. “Check on your neighbors, and if you see someone struggling in the heat, don’t wait to intervene.”

We’re Here When You Need Us

Knox County Hospital District encourages all residents to make heat and sun safety a priority this season. Whether you're working, playing, or relaxing outdoors, taking a few simple steps can make all the difference.

Guess reminds everyone to always call 911 in the event of an emergency. To learn about local healthcare programs and services or to find a provider, please visit www.knoxhospital.org.

About Knox County Hospital District

Founded in 1926, Knox County Hospital District provides healthcare for residents of Knox County and surrounding areas. The district offers a wealth of medical services, including 24-hour emergency care, advanced radiology services, a clinical laboratory, home health, physical therapy, long-term care, patient education, and more. For additional information, please call 940-657-3535 or visit www.knoxhospital.org.

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