

# Enjoy your summer activities safely and be aware of dehydration signs

It is summertime once again in The Villages, and families are coming to visit and enjoy our beautiful surroundings. It is a wonderful time to take in all the outdoor activities our community has to offer and spend quality time with our loved ones.

With all of these great outdoor adventures, there are a couple of important things to remember.

Before you venture out, you should consider the hot climate and how it may impact you and your guests. Heat is a fact of life in Florida, compounded by the addition of humidity. As the temperature and humidity levels rise, so does the potential danger of dehydration.

Excessive water loss can decrease the effectiveness of the body's natural ability to cool itself and cause severe or life-threatening issues. Please keep in mind that children are also very susceptible to the effects of heat.

So what steps should we take to prevent these problems? First, if you are going out to play or relax outside for any extended amount of time, plan a day ahead. Start by drinking large amounts of fluid at least 24 hours before the outing.

Iced tea, coffee or alcohol should be avoided as these beverages can accelerate dehydration. Fluids such as water or Gatorade are smart choices for preventing dehydration.

However, if the heat index is very high, choose activities that can be done indoors during the hottest hours of the day or consider those activities that allow frequent breaks in the air conditioning.

So how do you know if you've had too much of a good



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thing on a sunny day here in The Villages? Signs and symptoms of dehydration include dizziness, weakness, headaches and nausea.

More serious and possibly life-threatening indicators include confusion, lack of perspiration and muscle cramps. For these problems, you should seek immediate medical attention or dial 9-1-1.

Take any of these warnings seriously and cool off by heading indoors for a refreshing drink of water. It will take quite some time for the body's balance to be restored, so hit the movies or choose one of the many air-conditioned activities available at an area recreation center. It is best to avoid the heat until another day.

Another paramount summer item to remember is child safety. Our little visitors are bundles of fast-moving energy and they are at a greater risk of heat injury or illness than adults. They are also more likely to develop sunburns because they usually spend more time playing outdoors than adults.

Sunburns can range from minor stinging to severe blistering which can cause dehydration and infection. So generously (and frequently) apply sunscreen lotions with high SPF ratings and dress them in clothing that protects against UV rays.

Another safety concern with visiting children is swimming

pools. No matter if they are good swimmers or just learning to put their toes in the water, we need to keep an ever-vigilant, watchful eye on them. Keep pool gates and fences locked when not in use.

While in use, never leave a child unattended for a single minute. Most swimming pool incidents occur in less than a five-minute period of time. Have your home phone or cellphone by the pool so there is no reason to leave children unattended.

If the child is a new swimmer, you can provide them with some type of safety flotation device. But remember, these devices are only to be used with constant supervision. Devices may provide a false sense of security for adults and children alike. So always watch a child near water.

If you are not certified or simply want to refresh your knowledge of CPR, you can take a CPR class offered by The Villages Public Safety Department. For available dates and times, visit [districtgov.org/departments/Public-Safety/cpr.aspx](http://districtgov.org/departments/Public-Safety/cpr.aspx) or call us at 205-8280.

There are exciting things to do here all summer long! Let's all enjoy the fun and sun, safely. For more information on Summer Safety, visit The Villages Fire Headquarters at 3035 S. Morse Blvd. and on the District website ([districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org)). Until next time, enjoy your summer with friends and family here at Our Place.

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