



## Staying Safe in Summer Weather

Good preparation is key to summer safety for people with developmental disabilities so they can avoid health risks such as dehydration, sunburn, and water-related accidents.

### Dehydration

Dehydration is the loss of body fluids and electrolytes due to sweating and inadequate intake of water. Drinking alcohol or caffeine, such as coffee, tea, or pop, can make someone dehydrated.

#### Some signs include

- Exhaustion
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting
- Blurred vision
- Confusion
- Decreased urine output or urine that is concentrated and appears dark
- Extreme dry mouth
- Severe pain or blistering of skin



People taking diuretics, psychotropic, blood pressure, and laxative medications may be at greater risk for dehydration. Pack plenty of water to drink during outdoor activities.

### Being Safe in the Water

Direct support professionals (DSPs) should know each person's ability in the water before heading to the pool, and DSP supervisors should assess each staff member's ability to respond to water safety needs.

Wait to digest meals before swimming. DSPs should designate another staff member to stay out of the water and watch for problems.

Use life jackets or other flotation devices. Learn how from [boatus.org](http://boatus.org). Do not chew gum or eat while swimming.

Watch for someone being too tired, too cold, too far from safety, getting too much sun, or doing too much strenuous activity.



### Enjoying the Sun

Never leave someone alone in a vehicle during hot weather. It only takes a few minutes for someone to be at risk of heat stroke or death, as core body temperatures can rise quickly. Certain medications can make skin more sensitive to the sun, such as antihistamines, antibiotics, antidepressants, cardiovascular drugs, or oral medications for diabetes. Ask a doctor.



Remember sunburns can happen on cloudy days, so ensure people wear hats, especially if they have thin hair. Reapply sunscreen every two to three hours, or more if swimming. Use sunscreen with SPF15 or higher 30 minutes before going outside. Use lip balm with sunscreen and sunglasses with UV protection.