



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Staying Cool in the Heat of Summer

PATTY RITCHIE July 28, 2015

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

In case you had your doubts, summer is here. Recent temperatures hovering near 90 degrees have many people seeking relief from the heat. Although many people welcome the warm weather—especially given this year's brutal winter—there are steps we all need to take to stay cool and avoid health issues when the temperature rises:

Don't forget to hydrate: In hot weather, experts recommend drinking between two and four glasses of cool, non-alcoholic, low-sugar fluids every hour, even if you're not feeling particularly thirsty. If you're playing sports, exercising or working outdoors in high temperatures, your body will require more fluids to stay hydrated.

Stay out of the sun: To stay cool—and safe—try to rest in shady areas if you’re required to be outdoors. If your home isn’t equipped with an air-conditioner, try to visit public places like shopping malls, libraries, or “cooling centers” that are often times set up by local communities during the hottest part of the day.

Know the signs: If you feel weak, dizzy, overheated or experience muscle cramping, find a cool place, sit down and drink water. If these symptoms persist and you begin to experience nausea, vomiting, weakness or other indicators of heat-related illnesses, be sure to seek medical help.

Check on older friends and neighbors: During extreme heat, make sure you check on older family and friends who spend much of their time alone. Senior citizens don’t adjust as well to warm temperatures, and often times take prescription medications that can have side effects caused by extreme heat.

Keep an eye on your pets: Pets need special attention when the temperature rises too. Make every effort to keep your pet out of the heat by taking them for walks in the evenings or early morning when its cooler outside. If your animal begins to show signs of heat-related illnesses—namely vomiting or excessive panting—call your veterinarian. It’s also worth noting that you should never leave your pet in your vehicle during the summer heat.

While the warmer temperatures and sunny weather can be enjoyable, extreme heat and humidity often can be dangerous and at times, life-threatening. As the summer continues, I hope you’ll follow these tips to beat the heat and stay healthy at the same time.