

San Jacinto River Authority Kids Page...

HOW TO KEEP YOUR COOL WHEN IT GETS HOT



If you could do just one thing to beat the heat this summer...what would it be? The old saying that, “*only mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the noon-day sun*” offers an excellent strategy for surviving Texas summers!

Stay out of the sun while it’s at its hottest. This isn’t always easy to do, especially when a day at the beach or lake beckons. When you do have to be outside between 11 am and 2 pm, seek shady areas to limit your exposure to heat, and most of all, drink plenty of water.

Sunscreen and sunglasses don’t actually have a cooling effect, but their protection is vital during hot spells. In addition to being painful and skin-damaging, sunburn reduces the ability to release heat from the body and causes loss of body fluids. If you’re swimming, for example, even though water may be cool, the sun will still take its toll on you. The reflection of the sun off the water increases the likelihood that unprotected skin will burn. Determine when you’ll need to get out of the water before getting burned, and then head for some shade before that happens.

If you’re going to spend a lot of time outdoors, take time to **watch weather forecasts** for heat alerts and advisory notices issued by NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). These will give you an idea of how hot it will really feel. Never ignore a heat advisory...always be sure to keep water handy when outside for extended periods of time.

Dress simply. Lightweight, loose-fitting clothing will help to keep you cooler, and light colored clothing helps reflect the heat and sunlight better. Don’t forget your head. Hats are indeed cool – anything from a stylish wide-brimmed hat, to a light colored ball cap can help keep you cooler by providing shade. You might even try using a bandanna or scarf -- this can actually “wick” sweat away from your head, spread it over a larger area where it evaporates, and can actually reduce your scalp temperature.

A lot of anything can be too much during a Texas summer! Pack up the bling! Wear fewer accessories and jewelry during hotter weather. Metal jewelry will attract and hold the heat. If you have long hair, wear it up and off your face and shoulders. Wear footwear that breathes. Sneakers may be good for sports and athletic activities, but they can get really hot and uncomfortable. If you’re going to the beach



or pool, be sure to protect your feet from scalding hot beach sand and from sharp items in the water. Be careful if you decide to go barefoot. Many artificial pavements become unbearably hot during summer months and can seriously burn bare feet.

Stay hydrated. Water is essential for keeping your cool during hot weather. Water helps regulate your body temperature, and should be drunk even if you don’t feel thirsty. Here’s a cool idea: freeze a container of water to carry around with you. It’ll be solid when you leave home but it will melt and provide continuously chilled, slowly thawing water all day. Minimize drinks with caffeine, because these tend to increase dehydration.

Experts point out that temperatures inside a closed vehicle can reach over 140 degrees F within minutes and the sudden shock of getting into this super-heated air can raise your body temperature in a hurry. Exposure to these extreme temperatures can kill in minutes. Remember that youngsters’ bodies heat up faster than those of adults. NEVER leave a child -- or a pet -- in a parked car... even for a minute. Also, be aware that some objects in the car — seatbelt buckles and steering wheels — can become unbearably hot and burn young skin.

Rest is an important way of coping with too much heat. Don’t pass up the opportunity to rest when you feel tired during hot weather. If you start to feel ill in the heat, listen to your body. If you feel short of breath, feel fatigued or light-headed, have a headache, nausea, or feel confused, these are danger signs that the heat is getting to you. Immediately stop what you’re doing, rest somewhere as cool as possible, and drink plenty of water. If you continue to feel bad after a short rest, get medical assistance at once! 💧