

PREPARING FOR HEAT & COLD

How to prevent illness due to heat or cold

Be prepared and pay attention to the warning signs of hypothermia, frostbite, dehydration, or heatstroke.

First, realize that these illnesses can occur without conditions of extreme heat or cold. Hypothermia, for instance, isn't just a winter danger. It can easily strike on a hot day when a drenching rain soaks an unprepared, sweaty hiker.

On day hikes, have a bag of tricks in your backpack com-

Remove or add layers according to activity level, temperature, and weather.

KNACK CAR CAMPING FOR EVERYONE

Preventing Hypothermia and Frostbite

- Dress in layers appropriate to conditions.
- Bring warm hat and gloves, extra socks, rain gear, and an emergency blanket.
- Nibble high-energy foods.
- Keep hydrated.
- Don't ignore the warning signs: uncontrollable shivering, clumsiness, slurred speech for hypothermia; numbness or prickling pain for frostbite.

mensurate with the conditions: water, sports drinks, hats, bandannas, and sunscreen on hot days; extra hats, gloves, layers, high-energy snacks, and emergency blanket on cold days.

Know the weather forecast to be prepared for a storm or a drop in temperature. Have appropriate layers for wind, rain, and cold for everyone in the group, and encourage their use.

Layering



- Dress in layers to control body temperature and avoid sweating (see Chapter 4 for details).
- The base layer should be a long-sleeved top and long bottoms of synthetic or a synthetic/wool blend, never cotton.
- Put on a windproof layer at the top of a peak.
- Have waterproof rain gear in case of rain or snow.

Pay special attention to children whose small bodies and higher metabolisms are more sensitive to extremes than those of adults.

It's not enough to ask, "Are you thirsty?" By the time they feel thirst, mild dehydration has already set in. Encourage frequent water breaks whether or not they feel thirsty.

Add sports drink powder to water to make it more enticing to kids.

Stay Hydrated



- During physical activity, it's important to stay hydrated in cold and hot, humid weather.
- Drink before, during, and after strenuous activity, especially in humid weather, but also in cold weather, which depresses the body's natural thirst mechanism.
- Drink water at every rest stop, but don't gulp: The body can better absorb several small mouthfuls.
- Sports drinks replenish electrolytes lost through sweating, but beware of too much sugar.

GREEN LIGHT

- Sun protection: Avoid sunburn, wrinkles, and future skin cancers by using a high-SPF broad-spectrum sunscreen, preferably one that contains a physical barrier as well, like zinc oxide or a variation. Avoid direct sun exposure from 11 A.M. to 3 P.M., and wear lightweight, light-colored clothing to cover up. Don't forget sunglasses, a hat, and plenty of water.

Preventing Heat Illness



- Try to do strenuous activities during cooler times of the day, like early morning or evening.
- Take frequent water breaks and try to stay in the shade.
- If you feel overheated, dip a bandanna in a stream and put it around your head, or dip your shirt and let it dry on your back.
- Keep a close eye on the kids: Children overheat more easily than adults.