How can I protect my child from heat-related illnesses?

Children are at risk for heat-related illnesses when exposed to heat and humidity without proper hydration.

What is a heat illness?
Heat stress and exhaustion typically result from exposure to high heat without adequate fluid and salt replacement. If exposure to heat and humidity is physically intense or prolonged, a child may be at risk for heat stroke.

Diagnosis and Treatment

When your child is experiencing heat stress and exhaustion, he/she must be immediately removed from exercise/exposure to heat and rehydrated.

If you suspect heat stroke, move your child to a cooler location and contact a medical professional immediately. Apply cool cloths to your child’s body and remove any excess clothing. DO NOT give him/her fluids.

Additional cooling and treatment should be administered under the supervision of a medical professional.

Never leave your child in a locked vehicle, even for short periods of time.

Prevention
Schedule frequent water and rest breaks. Sports drinks containing electrolytes can help replace electrolytes lost through sweat when your child is engaging in prolonged (more than one hour) and vigorous exercise.

Symptoms of heat stress and heat exhaustion:
- Heavy sweating
- Weakness
- Fainting
- Muscle cramps
- Clammy skin
- Thirst
- Nausea

Symptoms of heat stroke:
- Fever (higher than 104°F)
- Nausea/vomiting
- Dizziness/confusion
- Unconsciousness
- Flushed, dry skin
- Seizures
- Visual disturbances
- Rapid breathing
- Rapid, strong pulse