Heat-related illnesses occur when the body’s natural cooling system begins to fail, allowing internal heat typically released through sweating to build. Three types of heat-related illnesses to be aware of include: heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heatstroke. Children are more at risk for heat-related illnesses because their bodies adjust slower than adults do to changes in heat and humidity. Children also produce more heat with activity and sweat less than adults. In addition, kids who take certain medications, are overweight, have a chronic health problem or wear heavy clothing during exercise (such as marching band or football uniforms) are at an even higher risk for heat related illnesses.

**Heat Cramps**

Heat cramps are painful muscle cramps or spasms happening during or after intense exercise in extreme heat. Sweating during vigorous activity causes the body to lose salts and fluids. These low salt levels cause the muscles to cramp. Symptoms include painful cramps – especially in the legs – and flushed moist skin. Heat cramps on their own are not serious, but should be treated right away because they can be the first sign of more serious heat illness. To treat, move your child to a cool place to rest. Remove excess clothing and give your child fluids containing salt and sugar, such as sports drinks. Gently stretch and massage cramped muscles to ease discomfort.

**Heat Exhaustion**

Heat exhaustion is a more severe form of heat illness. It happens when the body is unable to cool itself properly due to excessive loss of water and salt through sweating and not drinking enough to replace the lost fluids. If left untreated, heat exhaustion can progress to heat stroke. Symptoms include: muscle cramps, very pale and clammy skin, nausea or vomiting, headache, weakness and fainting. To treat, move your child to a cool place and remove excess clothing. Place cool cloths...
on your child’s skin and encourage your child to drink cool fluids containing salt and sugar, such as sports drinks. Call your child’s doctor for advice. If your child is too exhausted to drink or is unable to keep fluids down due to vomiting, take your child to the emergency department.

**Heat Stroke**

Heat stroke is the most severe form of heat illness and is a life-threatening medical emergency requiring immediate medical attention. Heat stroke happens when the body’s temperature-regulating system is overwhelmed by excessive heat and cannot cool the body. Body temperature can soar to 106°F or higher, leading to brain damage or even death if not quickly treated.

Heat stroke can also happen when a child is left in, or accidentally becomes trapped in, a car on a hot day. Temperatures inside vehicles can rise to dangerous and even deadly levels in just 10-20 minutes. Never leave a child alone in a car and always “look before you lock.”

Symptoms of heat stroke include warm, dry skin, no sweating, a fever over 104°F, rapid heart rate and breathing, nausea or vomiting, headache, weakness, confusion, irritability, loss of consciousness and seizure. Call 911 for emergency help if your child is showing one or more of these symptoms and has been outside in extreme temperatures. While waiting for help, get your child to a cooler location (inside or into the shade), undress your child, and sponge him or her with cool water. Offer cool fluids only if your child is awake, alert and able to drink.

**Prevention**

Fortunately you can help protect your child from heat-related illnesses with the following prevention tips:

- Have your child drink plenty of fluids before and during activity, especially on hot, humid days. Choose water and sports drinks with intense activity. Avoid caffeinated beverages which can cause dehydration.

- Dress your child in light-colored and loose-fitting clothing on hot days.

- Schedule vigorous activities during cooler times of the day, before 10 a.m. and after 6 p.m.

- Teach your child to take breaks in shady areas or come indoors to rest.

- Always apply sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher and encourage your child to wear a hat and sunglasses to protect their skin from harmful UV rays.

Sources: WebMD, Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin, KidsHealth

---

**Recipe: Banana Split Bites**

**Ingredients:**

- 1 inch pineapple chunks
- 1 firm (not too ripe) banana cut into bite-sized pieces
- 6 medium sized strawberries, cut in half
- 2.5 oz. of dark chocolate
- 1 teaspoon coconut oil
- Chopped nuts, granola, or coconut (optional)

**Instructions:**

Assemble one piece of each fruit into stacks, press a popsicle stick through the fruit, place on a cookie sheet and freeze until solid (1-2 hours). Line another cookie sheet with parchment paper. Melt chocolate and coconut oil on the stovetop or in the microwave, stirring often to prevent burning. Once completely melted, dip one side of the frozen fruit stacks into the chocolate, let the excess drip off and place on the prepared cookie sheet to harden. If desired, dip the chocolate covered side immediately into chopped nuts, granola or coconut before placing them on the sheet to harden. Once the chocolate is completely hardened, place in an airtight container and store in the freezer until ready to serve.

Source: MOMables at http://www.momables.com/banana-split-bites-recipe-better-than-fruit-salad/

**Activity: Easy Paper Rockets**

You will need: a plastic straw, paper, tape, markers or crayons and other items to decorate your paper. To create your rocket, decorate your paper, roll your paper snuggly around the straw and tape at the seam to form a tube. Take your rocket tube off of the straw, fold over one end and tape off to close the top. Insert a plastic straw into the open end of your rocket tube, aim away from others (keeping safety in mind) and blow through your straw to launch your rocket. Have fun chasing after your rocket and ask friends to play along. Challenge your friend to a distance, height or aiming contest.