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Protecting Children During Extreme Summer Heat

Summer is a great time for outdoor play, but high temperatures can also pose serious health risks for children. Understanding how heat affects the body can help families prevent heat-related illness.

Children are more vulnerable to extreme heat than adults because their bodies heat up more quickly and they may not recognize early warning signs of overheating. Spending long periods outdoors without proper hydration or shade increases the risk of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Health experts recommend encouraging children to drink water frequently and limiting outdoor activity during the hottest hours of the day. Lightweight clothing and shaded areas can also help reduce the risk of overheating.

Parents and caregivers should watch for warning signs such as dizziness, nausea, headache, or unusual fatigue. If a child begins showing these symptoms, moving them to a cooler location and providing fluids can help prevent more serious health concerns.

Another important safety reminder is to never leave a child unattended in a vehicle. Temperatures inside a parked car can rise quickly and become dangerous within minutes.

For more information, visit healthychildren.org or contact Michelle Broxterman, Family and Child Development Extension Agent, at mbroxterman@ksu.edu or (620)724-8233.

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