



Summer & Alcohol Safety

Summer Heat

Many people enjoy the summer weather. However, heat-related illness can pose a risk when temperatures rise. It is important to keep hydrated and rest frequently in shaded areas when in the heat.

Alcohol and caffeine are diuretics, and can contribute to dehydration and heat exhaustion. Instead of consuming these beverages, you should keep hydrated with adequate amounts of water or sports drinks.

Drinking alcohol in the heat also can impact your judgment. The more alcohol you consume, the harder it is for you to recognize whether you might have a heat-related illness. The combination of alcohol and heat poses especially serious health risks for older adults and individuals with medical conditions, such as diabetes or heart disease.

The National Safety Council offers these suggestions to avoid heat-related illness during the summer:

- Keep hydrated. Drink non-alcoholic or non-caffeinated beverages, such as water or sports drinks.
- If you decide to drink an alcoholic or caffeinated beverage, be sure to drink plenty of water before, during and after.
- If you take any medication regularly, ask your doctor if you need to be extra cautious when outdoors and in the sun and heat.

Motor Vehicle and Boating Crashes

Summer is a dangerous time of year for motor vehicle and boating crashes. Never drink alcohol and drive. If you plan to drink, designate a nondrinking driver. When boating, never allow alcohol on board. Alcohol is the leading contributor in boating deaths. In 2008, 124 deaths and 276 injuries occurred because of alcohol use, according to the U.S. Coast Guard.