

CHILDREN'S OUTDOOR PLAY: STAYING SAFE IN EXTREME HEAT



Outdoor playtime is important for your child every day, but when temperatures are high, it is critical to adapt to keep your child safe. Children are more vulnerable to extreme heat than adults.



ACROSS TEXAS, CHILDREN ARE NOT GETTING ENOUGH DAILY EXERCISE

Children should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. However, in 2021-2023, only 26% of Texas elementary-aged children were physically active for 60 minutes per day every day in the past week.

ACUTE HEALTH IMPACTS OF HEAT ON CHILDREN

- Heat rash and cramps
- Heat exhaustion or heat stroke
- Dehydration and kidney issues
- Asthma attacks

Certain medical conditions or medications may affect heat tolerance. Talk to your doctor about how to keep your child safe in the heat.

SYMPTOMS OF HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS

- Heavy sweating
- Muscle cramping or weakness
- Headaches
- Disorientation
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea or dizziness
- High body temperature
- Goose bumps or cool, damp skin

ADAPTATIONS TO CHILDREN'S OUTDOOR PLAY BASED ON HEAT RISK LEVEL

CHECK YOUR AREA'S HEAT RISK DAILY.
SCAN AND ENTER YOUR ZIPCODE!



References:

- Austin Independent School District. (n.d.). Health services. <https://www.austinisd.org/health-services>
- California Department of Public Health. (2024, July 1). Extreme heat guidance for schools (Revised from June 30, 2023). <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/EPO/Pages/Extreme%20Heat%20Pages/extreme-heat-guidance-for-schools.aspx>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). About heat and health. <https://www.cdc.gov/heat-health/about/index.html>
- United Nations Children's Fund. (n.d.). Heat waves are having a devastating impact on children. <https://www.unicef.org/stories/heat-waves-impact-children>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2018). Physical activity guidelines for Americans (2nd ed.). Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. [https://odphp.health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical Activity Guidelines 2nd edition.pdf](https://odphp.health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical%20Activity%20Guidelines%202nd%20edition.pdf)

Little to No Risk	• Play outside as usual (at least 60 minutes/day every day) • Take breaks every 20 minutes
Minor Risk	• Take breaks and drink water every 20 minutes • Play in a shaded area
Moderate Risk	• Move outdoor activity to the coolest parts of the day, if possible • Play outside no more than 45 minutes at a time • Take breaks and drink water every 15 minutes • Play in a shaded area
Major Risk	• Avoid outdoor activity entirely during late morning to late afternoon hours (when weather is hottest) • Play outside no more than 30 minutes at a time • Take breaks and drink water every 5-10 minutes • Play in a shaded area
Extreme Risk	• Do not play outdoors • Move all physical activity to a safe, air-conditioned space • Drink plenty of water
Other Tips	• Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing or uniforms • Carry a reusable waterbottle. Drink throughout the day • Drink water, not energy drinks, sports drinks, or soda