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News Release

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Keep Your Cool This Summer: Recreating in the Heat

The summer is a great time to get outdoors and recreate, but the higher temperatures do pose some challenges and risks. It's important to understand how to prevent sunburn, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke, and to clear up the misconceptions that often come with them.

Avoid Sunburn: Just a few serious sunburns can increase your risk of skin cancer later in life. Use sunscreen with a least a SPF 15 and UVA (ultraviolet A) and UVB (ultraviolet B) protection. Seek shade, especially during mid-day when the UV rays are the most harmful. Use clothing, cover-ups, hats and sunglasses to help shield the sun.

Avoid Heat-Related Illness: When it comes to the risk of heat exhaustion and heat stroke, remember to stay cool, and stay hydrated. When outside avoid direct sunlight, dress infants and children in loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing, and drink more water than usual. It's recommended that adults have two to four cups of water every hour while working or exercising outside. Avoid alcohol or liquids containing high amounts of sugar. Remember that muscle cramping might be the first sign of heat-related illness, and may lead to either heat exhaustion or stroke.

Know the Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion vs. Heat Stroke: Heat exhaustion and heat stroke have different symptoms, however both should be taken seriously. Heat stroke is considered a medical emergency. Heat exhaustion involves heavy sweating, while with heat stroke the body stops sweating. Additionally, in heat stroke the body temperature rises over 103 degrees. Learn the differences of these symptoms and what action you should take on the [CDC website](http://www.cdc.gov).

Consider visiting Jeffco Open Space Parks that have shaded trails to avoid being in direct sun when you are recreating. Some examples of Parks that have tree-shaded portions are White Ranch, Alderfer/Three Sisters, Elk Meadow, Flying J Ranch, and Reynolds Parks. Remember to always bring water for your pets too.

The Jeffco Parks Department is comprised of Jeffco Open Space, the Fairgrounds, CSU Extension, Boettcher Mansion and Weed and Pest. Open Space, the largest division, was founded as a land conservation organization in 1972 and preserves natural and cultural resources, provides quality outdoor recreation experiences and promotes sound environmental stewardship. Jeffco Open Space is funded with a one-half of one-percent sales tax that has protected over 53,000 acres and created 28 regional parks and 230 miles of trails in Jefferson County.

Jefferson County Public Health is committed to promoting health, preserving the environment and preventing injury and disease for the residents of Jefferson County, Colorado. Please call 303-232-6301 or visit our web site at jeffco.us/public-health for more information.