



Ohio Administrative Code 5123:2-17-02 requires all developmental disabilities employees to review Health and Welfare Alerts released by the department as part of annual training. All previous alerts are listed on the department's website.

Summer Safety #02-5-18

Good preparation is key to summer safety for people with developmental disabilities, so they can avoid health risks, such as dehydration, sunburn, and water-related accidents.

Water Safety

- Service providers should know each person's ability in the water before heading to the pool
- Supervisors of direct service providers should assess each staff member's ability to respond to water safety needs and staff accordingly
- Wait to digest meals before swimming
- Service providers should designate another staff member to stay out of the water and watch for problems
- Use life jackets or other flotation devices. Learn how from boatus.org
- Do not chew gum or eat while swimming
- Avoid the "Dangerous TOO's": too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, or too much strenuous activity



Autism and Drowning

According to the National Autism Association, drowning is among the leading causes of death for people with autism.

In 2009, 2010, and 2011, accidental drowning accounted for 91 percent of total U.S. deaths reported in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) ages 14 and younger, after they wandered away or eloped.

More than one third of children with ASD who wander or elope are rarely or not able to communicate their name, address, or phone number, making it especially important to address potential risks.



Check out [this resource](#) for first responders from Autism Speaks



Use Autism Speaks' [letter template](#) to talk to neighbors about autism

Sun Safety

Sunburn is a painful skin condition, which occurs as a result of over-exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays.

Risk of sunburn is higher for people with fair skin, blue eyes, and red or blonde hair. People with darker skin tones can also burn.

Some medications can make skin more sensitive to the sun, such as antihistamines in cold and allergy medicines, antibiotics, antidepressants, cardiovascular drugs, and oral medications for diabetes.

Ask a doctor if medicine makes someone's skin more sun-sensitive.

To prevent sunburn

- Avoid the sun between 10 AM and 4 PM or stay in the shade
- Wear a hat, especially if hair is thin on top of head
- Reapply sunscreen every two to three hours, or more if swimming
- Remember sunburns can happen on cloudy days
- Leave direct sun when first noticing skin is getting pink

- Use sunscreen with SPF15 or higher 30 minutes before going outside
- Use lip balm with sunscreen and sunglasses with UV protection



Dehydration

Dehydration is the loss of body fluids and electrolytes due to sweating and inadequate intake of water. Drinking alcohol or caffeine, such as coffee, tea, or pop, can make someone dehydrated.

Some signs include

- Exhaustion
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting
- Blurred vision
- Confusion
- Decreased urine output or urine that is concentrated and appears dark
- Extreme dry mouth
- Severe pain or blistering of skin



People taking diuretics, psychotropic, blood pressure, and laxative medications may be a greater risk. Pack plenty of water to drink during outdoor activities.

Hot Car Safety

It is dangerous to leave people unattended in vehicles during the summer months.

It can lead to dehydration, heat stroke, or death.

- Never leave someone alone in a hot vehicle for any period of time
- It only takes a few minutes for someone to be at risk, as core body temperatures rise quickly
- If someone must stay in the vehicle, keep the air conditioning on or windows open
- Consider the health needs of seniors and those with trouble breathing when planning activities on hot days