Hot Weather and Your Medications: What You Need to Know

Summer temperatures can do more than make you uncomfortable, they can also affect how certain medications work and increase your risk of heat-related illness.

Some medications can make it harder for your body to cool itself, increase dehydration, or make your skin more sensitive to sunlight. When temperatures rise, it's important to understand how your medications may affect your ability to stay safe in the heat.

Medications That May Increase Heat Sensitivity

Several common types of medications can affect your body's response to hot weather, including:

- Diuretics ("water pills"), which can increase fluid loss and dehydration
- Antihistamines, which may reduce sweating
- Some blood pressure medications and heart medications
- Certain antidepressants and antipsychotic medications
- Stimulant medications used to treat ADHD
- Some diabetes medications
- Medications that increase sun sensitivity, such as certain antibiotics
- Never stop taking prescribed medication without consulting your healthcare provider.

Warning Signs of Heat-Related Illness

- Seek medical attention if you experience symptoms such as:
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Excessive fatigue
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Muscle cramps
- Confusion
- Rapid heartbeat
- Fainting

These may be signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke, which can become serious quickly.

Tips for Staying Safe

- Drink water regularly, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Avoid prolonged outdoor activity during the hottest part of the day.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Take breaks in air-conditioned spaces when possible.
- Store medications according to label instructions, as excessive heat can damage some medications.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist whether any of your medications increase your risk of heat-related illness.

The Bottom Line

If you take prescription medications, be aware that hot weather can affect your body's ability to regulate temperature. A quick conversation with your healthcare provider or pharmacist can help you understand any additional precautions you should take during the summer months.

SOURCES: U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, "HEAT AND MEDICATIONS – GUIDANCE FOR CLINICIANS" (2025); U.S. FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, MEDICATION STORAGE AND HEAT SAFETY GUIDANCE.