

Summertime in Buffalo

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Someplace I read that Buffalo has more swimming pools per capita than any other city in the country. I don't know whether that's true, but it's believable – we're so elated when warm weather finally arrives that we revel in it! Winter will come soon enough. So, while weather allows, get outdoors, go to one of the free concerts, take in a matinee at Niagara on the Lake, go to Delaware Park on a Sunday afternoon for a great panoply of people and dress and lifestyles, and listen to some fun jazz. Take in Shakespeare in Delaware Park on a lovely summer evening; it's more comfortable if you take along a lawn chair. Farmers' markets have fresh produce; the County fair is an annual event; a Bisons game at Coca-Cola Field is a fun way to relax and enjoy the ambiance as well as the game. Stroll along the waterfront, whether downtown at the Marina where we went for a picnic the other night, or out in Tonawanda, or wherever; you'll feel a cooling breeze almost anytime. What a pleasant way to get a dose of Vitamin D but don't forget your sunscreen if you'll be in the sun.

Be aware, though, that summer carries its own particular risks for seniors so its enjoyment should be tempered with reasonable caution. Summer warmth can feel great but it can be dangerous and can kill.

Dehydration is a serious risk, made worse because of the inevitable decline in our senses that comes as we age. Just as our vision changes, our taste buds are less sensitive, and our hearing becomes less acute as we age, so does our sense of thirst. And, because we don't feel thirst as acutely as younger people, we're less inclined to drink water. That can quickly lead to dehydration which can be life threatening.

My medical friends tell me that symptoms of dehydration may include feeling thirsty, decreased urination, dry mouth, and fatigue but only some of these symptoms may be present and they may seem quite mild, so one's inclination may be to ignore them, as unwise as that is. Again, the way to avoid this is to drink water often and in adequate amounts.

The simple, obvious preventive measure is to drink water. The more water we lose through perspiration or through any medical problem such as diarrhea, the more water we need to drink. And that means picking up a glass of water not just when we're thirsty, but much more often than that. Neither coffee nor tea works; alcohol doesn't do it either. Water is the liquid of choice. As you take in some of those outdoor activities, carry a bottle of water with you and take a drink, often, unless you've been told to limit your water intake.

Overheating is another potentially very serious risk. Remember the old days when we used to go to the movies in the summer so that we could be cool in the air conditioned theater? There was logic and good sense in that. We felt cooled off and refreshed at the end of the movie, regardless of what we had seen on the screen. If you have air conditioning in your home, turn it on. Not using it to save



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electricity can threaten your life; that's not money well saved. If your home isn't air conditioned, open your windows wide and see if you can get enough air movement to cool off your home. Get a fan and use it.

These aren't just passing fancies. They're potentially life saving actions so pay attention.

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