



971-C S. Kenmore Drive
Evansville, IN 47714
Phone: 812-423-5943 Toll-Free: 1-866-514-4312
www.tristatems.org
“Like” us on Facebook
Follow us on Twitter and Instagram



August 2021 Newsletter

Offering support, care, and hope...*right here at home!*

All Support Group Meetings and Newsletter Folding are Cancelled Until Further Notice!

We are continuing to work behind the scenes to make sure the telephone calls, emails, and office needs are being handled. It is important to us that we provide up-to-date information on our website and Facebook page for you. Please stay safe and stay well!

Send your email address to officemanager@tristatems.org to receive newsletters and programs!

The Mission of the Tri-State Multiple Sclerosis Association is to enhance the quality of life for individuals living with MS & their families in Southern IN, Southern IL & Western KY

Tips to Help You Survive the Summer While Living With Multiple Sclerosis

Susan Reynolds RN, MSCN

Now is the time for the worst of the summer heat to start rolling in. I am never ready for it. I choose to do most everything indoors in the air conditioning in the summer time. I find I can tolerate heat a little better if I stay out of the direct sunlight. If I go outside, I stay in the shade or do outdoor activities when the sun goes down.

Hot weather or becoming overheated can temporarily worsen MS symptoms. The temporary worsening is due to an increase in body temperature and will usually disappear when the body temp returns to normal. Getting the body temperature back to normal can be as easy as taking a cool shower, a cool bath or jumping in the pool.

Heat intolerance to people with MS is felt as increased symptoms, such as: Decreased cognitive function, numbness in the extremities, fatigue, blurred vision (known as Uthoff’s sign), tremor, or weakness.

What causes heat intolerance? People with MS have plaques or places where demyelination has taken place. Demyelination slows down the transmission of the nerve impulses. An increase in body temp of ¼ to ½ of a degree can worsen MS symptoms because heat further impairs the ability of the demyelinated nerve to conduct electrical impulses. Heat produces only a temporary worsening of MS symptoms. It does not cause actual tissue damage. As stated before, the symptoms can be rapidly reversed when the body is cooled.

Fluid Intake

- During the hotter months, it's essential that you drink plenty of cold drinks to keep you hydrated and replace the fluids you lose in sweat. Get in the habit of carrying a bottle of water around with you. Keep a couple of plastic bottles filled with water in your freezer to take along in the car and drink as they melt.
- If you have bladder problems, you might find that sucking on ice cubes or popsicles works better to keep you cooler rather than taking on too much extra liquid.
- Avoid drinks which dehydrate the body such as coffee, cola, and alcoholic drinks.
- Metabolic heat in the body is increased by eating large meals, or meals that contain high amounts of protein. Avoid raising the metabolic heat by eating several smaller meals or snacks rather than three large meals each day, and limit the amount of protein you eat.
- Chrysanthemum tea has cooling properties which are also reported to help clear your head.

Clothing

- Wear loose clothing in cotton or man-made fibers that allow the body to breathe, including your underwear and nightwear.
- Avoid nylon pantyhose and socks.
- Choose lighter-colored clothing that reflect the sun's rays, rather than darker clothes which absorb them.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat when in the sun.
- You can also try wearing a cap that's been placed in the freezer for an hour beforehand.
- A wet scarf or bandana around the neck can help cool you down.
- Wear open-toed shoes or sandals to allow the feet to breathe.
- Buy a cooling bra made from microfibers that allow airflow and also have inserts which can be placed in the refrigerator beforehand.
- Cooling vests, collars and other wearable cooling products offer relief if you want to spend a few hours outdoors.

Cooling Down

- After-sun creams containing aloe vera help to cool the skin after being outside.
- Take a dip in the pool or ocean, if you can. If not, take a cool shower or bath.
- Applying cold water or ice packs to certain parts of the body will help bring body temperature down. Try the wrists, ankles, backs of the knees, inner elbows, temples, and inner thighs.

- Place flannel or a small towel in a bag in the freezer for a few hours and then pop it behind your back if you're going to be in a warm car for a long period of time.
- Open doors and windows in your home to create a cross breeze.
- If there is no breeze, close curtains or shutters to keep the home dark and cool.
- Exercise in places with air-conditioning, go swimming, or take a water aerobics class. Be sure the water in the pool is 85 degrees or less.
- Arrange your day so that you do chores around the house or garden in the early morning before it gets too hot.
- Eat a Sandwich. Choose easy-to-prepare meals that don't require spending a lot of time in a hot kitchen.
- Pre-Cool. Cool down before activities with a cold shower. Getting chilly before heading outside seems to buy a lot of time before you feel the heat. You will have to experiment with how cool of a shower you can endure and how much it helps you, but you might be surprised at the increase in your tolerance for the heat.
- Don't blow dry your hair with a hot blow dryer.

Keeping Cool at Night

- If air conditioning is out of your budget, invest in portable fans that can be placed in your bedroom and living room. A frozen bottle of water in front of the fan will create cool air.
- Keep bedroom curtains or blinds drawn all day so heat doesn't build up in the room.
- Choose cotton sheets and pillows with natural fibers and filling.
- Take a cool shower or bath just before bed.
- Put your pillow in the freezer for half an hour before going to bed.

More Cooling Tips

Use a Microwave. Don't use the oven in the summer. Use a microwave instead. If you use an oven, don't open the door to check on the food. The blast of hot air is enough to trigger symptoms.

Take an Aspirin. Some Neurologists suggest taking one regular strength aspirin before going out in the heat, to keep your core body temperature down.

Get "The Handicapped Tag". If you are ambulatory, it may not have occurred to you to get a disabled parking placard to avoid crossing blazing hot parking lots in the summer. Some of you might be resistant to getting one. A "Tag" can be a lifesaver during the hot summer months. Get one just in case you need it. Save your energy for what you want to do rather than burning up all of your energy getting from the car to your destination.