

Staying Healthy

SUMMER 2015

Inside:

- Safety in the Summer
- 9 things to check about heart health

Summer fun Summer Safety

Swimming pools
mean good times but be
aware of hazards



For many families, some of the most anticipated summertime activities happen around the pool. But before you dive into the fun, be sure you and your family know the many ways to practice pool safety, from respecting the dangers of water to protecting against the sun to making sure swimming pools are properly treated.

Practice swim safety this summer

Swimming is a lot of fun, but drowning is a real danger. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reveals that drowning is the second most common cause of accidental deaths among kids.

Battalion chief Michael Miller of the Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department clearly remembers an incident of a near-drowning about 10 years ago in a backyard swimming pool in Pleasanton.

"A 3-year-old boy was found at the bottom of the pool," Miller recalled. "Pleasanton Police Department arrived on scene and started resuscitation efforts. Then we arrived on scene and were able to get the child breathing."

The boy was breathing on his own but not yet conscious when he arrived at the hospital.

"But he survived without any brain damage," Miller was pleased to report. "His parents call it his 'second birthday,' and they send a card to us every year."

"Prevention is important — keeping doors locked, and fences around pools," Miller said. "Get kids into swim school as soon as you can."

He said swimming pools can now be outfitted with alarms that go off if someone accidentally enters the water.

"The best method is never turn your back

on a toddler," he said, noting that drownings also take place in bathtubs.

He said the fire department answers calls in the summertime at Shadow Cliffs Regional Park when a child is missing who was last seen in the water, and the lake will be cleared while they begin a search.

"Usually they went to the snack shack," Miller said.

Accidents often happen around backyard pools when the adults are drinking and not minding children who can't swim, said Joe Toscano, an emergency room doctor at San Ramon Regional Medical Center.

"Luckily not a lot of people die from that, but there are a lot in hospitals from near-drowning in swimming pools, people's backyard pools," he said. "There is a spectrum of injury that goes along with drowning, not to the lungs but to the brain. They are deprived of oxygen."

He noted that people also get injured in swimming pools when they dive into the shallow end.

As an advocate for swim safety, Olympic gold medal winner and mom Janet Evans offers these tips to keep kids safe this summer:

Enroll in swimming lessons. Many people lack basic swimming skills, and enrolling children in swimming lessons at a young age will help reduce the risk of accidents and drowning.

Don't allow children to swim alone. Drowning is silent, and it happens quickly. Always have a responsible adult watching while children are either in or out of the pool.

Keep pool areas tidy. Cleaning up pool toys after play can help lessen the temptation of children to enter the pool area unsupervised.

Sun safety

Severe sunburns are more likely at the

beginning of the summer when the skin is pale after not much exposure during the colder months.

"We see severe sunburns, when people are not using sunblock and are staying out for too long" said Donna Koon, director of emergency services for Stanford Health Care-ValleyCare. "Depending on the severity, they can actually get blistering, and we have to treat it as a burn."

Sunburns can be the source of severe pain, fever and even dehydration. Plus they can have long-term effects, especially for youngsters: Just one sunburn during childhood can increase the risk of developing skin cancer.

According to the American Academy of Dermatology, multiple events of extreme sunburn for individuals age 18 and younger can contribute to the development of melanoma.

The sun's harsh rays can also affect your appearance later in life, causing premature aging and wrinkling of the skin. For babies 6 months old or younger, keep their sensitive skin out of sunlight completely. For all other ages, here are the dos and don'ts for playing in the sun:

Dress your baby in protective clothing

- Always cover your baby's arms and legs in airy, light-colored garments. Dark colors absorb heat, while lighter hues reflect it, keeping baby cooler.

- Look for shirts and swimwear made from sun-protective fabrics. These garments are especially great if your kids spend a lot of time outdoors in the summer.

- Choose a wide-brimmed hat or ball cap and sunglasses to protect your baby's eyes.

Don't forget the sunscreen

- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends that you avoid applying sunscreen on infants younger than 6 months.

- Individuals with sensitive skin should seek a hypoallergenic, chemical-free formula with zinc oxide or titanium oxide with an SPF of 15 or higher. If you use a chemical-based sunscreen, always test on a patch of skin first.

- Apply sunscreen at least every two hours and pay attention to the product's expiration date as the active ingredients can lose their effectiveness over time.

Water safety

Once your skin is properly protected, it's almost time to jump in. But before you do, make sure the water is clean and ready.

Do test the water daily

- Whether your pool uses traditional chlorine or is equipped with a salt chlorine generator, make testing it a top priority, especially when your pool is used frequently.

- Make sure to read and follow the product label instructions closely when dealing with pool chemicals. Proper dosing of pool chemicals is important for swimmer comfort.

- Always test the water and make sure the free chlorine level never falls below 1 part per million (ppm). Chlorine is the main sanitizer of your pool (and drinking water), and the more people in your pool, the more chlorine you may need.

Don't assume "salt water" pools are better or easier

- What people call "salt water" pools are still chlorine pools; the salt chlorine generator just makes chlorine on-site.

- Both traditional chlorine and "salt water" pools contain chlorine.

- Some people believe pools with salt chlorine generators are maintenance free — but this is

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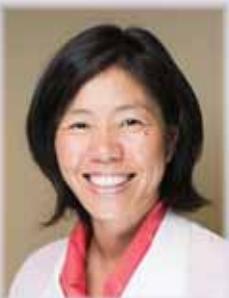


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9 surprising signs of an unhealthy heart

Don't let symptoms sneak by you

You take care of your car with regular oil changes, and replace the brake pads when they wear out. You keep mold from growing in your shower, and you are quick to get your cable and TV fixed when it goes awry. Taking care of the day-to-day essentials can make life a whole lot smoother. So can taking care of your heart. It's just harder to see when this essential muscle is having hiccups. It's not as obvious as a flickering TV, or a set of squealing brake pads.

Here are nine things to monitor that can indicate how your ticker is ticking and signs of an unhealthy heart:

1) Swollen, bleeding, sore gums

Most dentists know, there is a connection between your gum health and your cardiovascular health. Some of the same bacteria can be found in both places. If you have periodontal disease, this could indicate that you may have a bit of underlying heart disease occurring in your veins and arteries as well.

2) Snoring and sleep apnea

If you or your partner has sleep apnea, then your

chances of having a heart attack in the next five years is triple the normal risk. The reason? Sleep apnea may damage the right side of the heart, because of the strain your lungs are under trying to break through obstruction. Sleep problems can occur from other things like excessive snoring, and it's a good idea to get your heart checked out, too.

3) Swollen feet and legs

If you have a problem with your shoes getting tight by the end of the day, and excessive fluid gathers in your legs and feet, you might be experiencing some fluid retention. It's easy to identify when you take off your socks, and you can see deep marks or indents into your ankles and legs, accompanied by puffy areas of skin.

This is called edema, and is an indicator of coronary artery disease (CAD), which is where the arteries that supply blood to your heart tissue are blocked. Edema can point to other kinds of cardiovascular disease and even heart failure.

4) Coughing

Especially if it is persistent,

coughing is one signal that you may have fluid accumulation in your lungs, which is one of the symptoms of heart failure. Now if you were sick and had a small cold, a little coughing is not something to worry about.

But if you feel like you struggle to breathe because of fluid in your lungs, it might be related to your heart not pumping blood the way it is supposed to, and the lack of pressure causes fluid to accumulate where it normally shouldn't — such as in your lungs. This could be a sign of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) which begins with an unhealthy heart.

5) Dizziness

If you have an abnormal heart rhythm (known as an arrhythmia), then you could feel a little lightheaded, and would want to report this to your doctor. A heart attack can also cause dizziness, and fainting or loss of consciousness.

6) Fatigue

Women do not typically experience the same signs of an unhealthy heart as men do. In fact, often women report extreme fatigue, as if

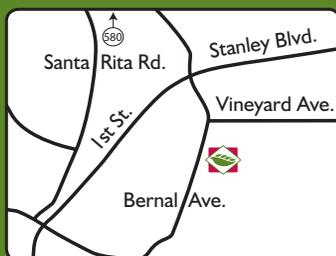
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someone let all the air out of their balloon, prior to having a heart attack. This fatigue can arise a few days leading up to a heart event, and so going to get it checked out immediately can mean life or death for some women. It's important not to waste time in this situation, as it could also indicate heart failure.

7) No appetite and nausea

During a heart attack, it's common that a person may experience nausea and possibly be sick to their stomach enough to throw up. If you have heart failure, sometimes fluid can build up in the abdominal cavity, causing it to swell. This can really affect with your appetite, causing

you to be less hungry.

Both of these symptoms are direct signs of an unhealthy heart, and you will want to pay attention to them, and visit your doctor regularly to learn ways to reduce your risk of having a cardiac event such as a stroke, blood clot or heart attack.

8) Sweating

If you are just sitting at your desk or in your armchair, and all of a sudden you break out into a drenching sweat, it may be the initial signs of a cardiac event. You might look like you just had a huge workout, but you were actually just sitting, relaxed. This is absolutely the

time to call 9-1-1.

9) Weakness

This overall feeling of lack of strength manifests during the days leading up to a heart attack. The feebleness and unexplained weakness can be severe, and is very different from just feeling tired at the end of a long day.

Important Note:

If you find that one or more of the above signs describes your condition, seek advice from a medical professional immediately. This article is intended solely for informational purposes, and only your healthcare provider can make an accurate assessment of your heart health. ■

—bistroMD

SAFETY

Continued from Page 18

untrue, and neglecting things can lead to pool problems.

- No matter what kind of pool you have, it needs to be tested every day.

Tips for keeping water balanced

If your eyes are irritated and the pool water is cloudy or looks green — the balance is probably off.

Here's how to test:

- Use strips that show chlorine, alkalinity, pH and cyanuric acid levels.

- Follow instructions on the package for how to submerge the strip.

- Compare color readings on the strip to the range on the product bottle.

3 facts about "salt water" pools

While there are plenty of options available for pool owners, there are many opinions about pools equipped with salt chlorine generators and traditional chlorine pools. Check out these facts to learn more, and to decide which best fits your family's needs:

- In a "salt water" pool, chlorine is produced by a salt chlorine generator rather than adding chlorine to the pool directly. A "salt water" pool is still being sanitized by chlorine. So, a "salt water" pool is a chlorine pool.

- The same amount of chlorine is required to maintain a "salt water" pool as a traditional chlorine pool.

- "Salt water" pools require the same maintenance functions and still must be checked and balanced regularly, just like a traditional chlorine pool. ■

—Family Features. Dolores Fox Ciardelli contributed to this story.

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