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When You're Hot, You're HOT!

Do your symptoms of COPD flare up on days of high heat, humidity, or smog? You might find this can especially be an issue when a front moves in bringing humidity. Extreme temperatures often put stress on the entire body. Our bodies try to maintain a normal body temperature which is about 98.6. In the summer when we are exposed to extreme heat, our bodies expend more energy than normal to try and cool itself down in order to maintain the normal body temperature. The extra energy required for this puts a higher demand for oxygen on the body. If you have COPD, you are already using much of your energy to breathe alone, not to mention everything else you do during the day. So, therefore it is not uncommon to experience more shortness of breath when you are exposed to extreme heat as your body struggles to regulate your body temperature.

If you step outside on a really hot day and take in a deep breath, it can actually lead to bronchospasm. This results because a person with COPD already has inflamed and irritated airways from the disease process. The hot air causes the airways to contract and decrease in size. This makes it more difficult to get air into the lungs

which increases shortness of breath and makes it harder to breathe.

The Centers for Disease Control reported that between 1979 and 2003, there were over eight thousand deaths related to heat. During this time period, more people died from extreme heat than from tornados, hurricanes, lightening, floods and earthquakes combined.

Since we cannot control the weather, we must learn to control our environment. The following are some tips to follow to help "beat the heat" this summer.

- **Drink plenty of fluids.** During the hot summer months, remember to increase your fluid intake regardless of your activity level or thirst unless your doctor tells you not to for other health reasons.
- **Wear appropriate clothing and sunscreen.** Choose lightweight, light colored, loose fitting clothing. Be sure and wear sunscreen every day even if you are not planning on being in the direct sun, because when you have a sunburn, it is harder for the body to cool itself.
- **Carefully plan your activities.** Place sun protectors in your car when it is parked. Try to find shady areas to park and air conditioned



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- places to go. If you do have to go outside, do so in the early morning hours or after the sun goes down.
- **Stay Indoors.** If it possible to do so, stay indoors in air conditioning. If you do not have air conditioning, plan your day to go places that do such as to a friend's house or to the library. Take a cool shower or bath to cool your body temperature down. Avoid activities that require "extra" energy. Your local health department may also be able to recommend a heat-relief shelter in your area.
 - **Find a Buddy.** Ask family or friends to either call or stop by to check on you at least twice a day to make sure you are ok.
 - **Avoid Excessive Activity.** To get your daily exercise, join a gym or use a treadmill or other exercise equipment in an air-conditioned room. Remember to drink plenty of fluids while exercising.
 - **Take Your Meds.** Remember to take your medication as directed. If you are dependent on oxygen, also ask your doctor about your oxygen requirements during the summer months.

- **Watch The Weather Reports.**

Watch or listen to the weather reports so that you can plan your activities during the moderate weather or cooler times of the day.

So this summer, remember what to do in case of excessive heat in order to keep your cool and play it safe!

*~A life without love is like a year
without summer~
Author Unknown*

Is it OK if I SWIM?

Swimming and other aerobic exercises can reduce symptoms of COPD to improve quality of life by teaching your body to use oxygen more efficiently and by reducing your weight. Swimming offers the added benefit of moisturizing the air around you during exercise to help.

Follow The Steps Below If You Choose to Swim!

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Step 1

Warm up by performing gentle stretches before getting into the water. This helps prevent cramping while swimming and muscle soreness following exercise.

Step 2

Incorporate swimming into your daily routine gradually. Begin with less intensive exercise every few days and slowly build up to longer, more aggressive swimming.

Step 3

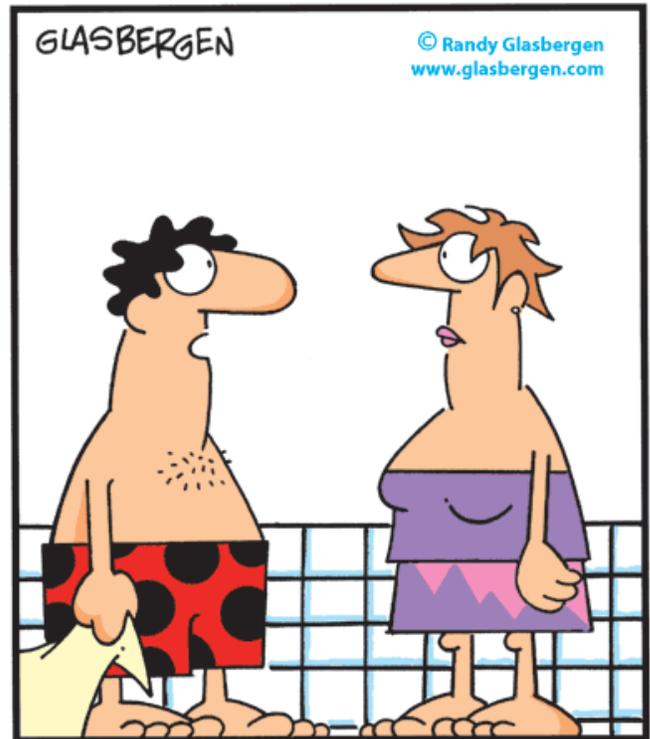
Check weather and pollution conditions before swimming outdoors. Your COPD makes you especially vulnerable to high levels of humidity and pollution. Additionally, very high or low temperatures may worsen your symptoms.

Step 4

Get out of the water and rest immediately if you feel short of breath, dizzy or fatigued. Do not rest in the water.

Step 5

Remain sitting or standing still during rest following swimming. Sitting on a couch or comfortable chair is acceptable. (not lying in bed!)



“If swimming is so good for you, how come I’ve never had a goldfish live longer than three weeks?”