



## If you can't take the heat...

The combination of heat and humidity can be a serious health threat during the summer months. If you work outdoors or at a beach resort, on a farm, or in a kitchen, laundry, or bakery, for example, you may be at risk for heat-related illness. So, take precautions. Here's how:

- Drink plenty of water before you get thirsty.
- Wear light, loose-fitting, breathable clothing-cotton is good.
- Take frequent short breaks in cool shade.
- Eat smaller meals before work activity.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol or large amounts of sugar.
- Find out from your health-care provider if your medications and heat don't mix.
- Know that equipment such as respirators or work suits can increase heat stress.

Helpful link on heat stress and heat stroke: [www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/)

**Hot weather poses special hazards for outdoor workers who must protect themselves against heat, insects, and other hazards. Employers and employees should know the potential hazards in their workplaces and how to manage them.**

## Lyme time

This illness is actually nothing to laugh about. While it is not fatal, if left untreated, Lyme Disease can cause severe, debilitating health problems, including meningitis, facial nerve palsy, and heart problems.

Lyme Disease is spread by the bite of infected deer ticks. "The incidence of Lyme infection is sharply on the rise in Maryland, especially in the northeastern counties," says retired Corporal Jon Carpenter of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Most, but not all, victims will develop a "bull's-eye" rash. Other signs and symptoms may be non-specific and similar to flu symptoms such as fever, headaches, lymph node swelling, neck stiffness, generalized fatigue, migrating joint aches, or muscle aches.

You are at increased risk for Lyme Disease if your work outdoors involves construct-

ion, landscaping, forestry, brush clearing, land surveying, farming, railroads, oil fields, utility lines, or park and wildlife management. Protect yourself with these precautions:

- Wear light-colored clothes to see ticks more easily.
- Wear long sleeves; tuck pant legs into socks or boots.
- Wear high boots or closed shoes that cover your feet completely.
- Wear a hat.
- Use tick repellants, but not on your face.
- Shower after work. Wash and dry your work clothes at high temperature.
- Examine your body for ticks after work. Remove any attached ticks promptly with fine-tipped tweezers. Do not use petroleum jelly, a hot match, or nail polish to remove the tick.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture provides a free tick identification service. Go to [www.mda.state.md.us](http://www.mda.state.md.us) and click on "Plants/Pests" at the top of page. Then click on the "Tick ID" form at right.



This photo compares the American dog tick, far left, with the tiny deer tick, at right. The largest of the deer ticks, measuring only 2 millimeters, is a female. The medium sized one, at 1 mm, is a male. The smallest ones, on the stamp, are nymphs.

Also, the Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene has published Fact Sheets on many topics affecting Maryland residents. Go to <http://www.edcp.org/html/cdindex.html> and click on "Lyme Disease."

Additional link on Lyme Disease: [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/)

## West Nile Virus is miles from Home

Illness from the West Nile virus is not as common as Lyme Disease, but it does occur. Mild symptoms include fever, headache, and body aches, occasionally with a skin rash on the trunk of the body and swollen lymph glands.

Getting rid of standing water in containers such as discarded tires, buckets, and barrels helps reduce mosquito-breeding areas. You can also protect yourself in these ways:

- Apply an insect repellent with DEET, being careful to follow the directions on the bottle. Apply directly to skin and on clothing.
- Wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks.
- Be extra vigilant at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.

Helpful link: [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile)

