

# Health Care It's Getting Real Hot Out There

BY DR. JIM EVANS, MD

*As summer temperatures soar, Dr. Jim Evans, MD, offers a collection of safety tips for travelers headed out for summer vacation. Serving as one of Allianz Travel Insurance's "Travel Doctors," he underscores the basics while also offering tips for recovering from sunburn and heat illness. While we all should be mindful of negative impacts of overexposure, he also points out increased risks for young children and the elderly. If you're working on any stories related to the heat waves scorching the planet, perhaps consider including some of Dr. Evans' tips to stay safe under the sun while traveling this summer.*

There are powerful heat waves rolling through Europe and North America. Savvy travelers may want to stay ahead and have a plan if you will be traveling and out in the heat. Especially young children and elderly travelers are more prone to heat illness as their body metabolisms don't accommodate a drastic change in temperature as well. Remember older travelers often have increased numbers of medical conditions, and are often on prescription medications that may make it more difficult for their bodies to regulate temperature naturally.

It's important to remember the basics when traveling: Maintain your hydration level, avoid excessive alcohol and caffeine (because they can actually exacerbate dehydration) and drink plenty of fluids whether

you feel that you need to or not. Taking in cold water or electrolyte containing fluids throughout the day will help you avoid heat illness. One tip is to set a timer for every hour to remind yourself to drink some water.

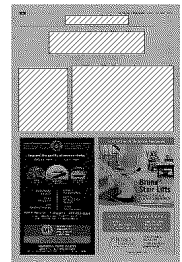
Make sure that you dress appropriately! Wear loose fitting clothing.

When you are outside in the summer heat make sure that you are using appropriate levels of sunscreen and find areas of shade outside of direct sun exposure as much as you can.

Try to plan your outdoor activities in the early morning or in the evening to avoid increased sun exposure during the midday. Especially if you're older, but this is good advice for everybody - if it's extremely hot outside make sure you take periodic breaks inside, especially in air conditioned spaces if you are able to.

If you start to get a sunburn make sure you cover up the exposed areas. Consider taking a cool bath and put moisturizing aloe vera on the burned areas. Try to stay out of the sun as much as possible.

If you start to notice increased sweating and/or muscle cramping, these are likely signs that you may have been in the heat too long. Nausea, dizziness and headaches are also signs of more significant heat illness. If you start to experience these symptoms please get into a cool space and out of the heat. Make sure you drink fluids and wait



# MONTANA SENIOR NEWS

Date: Friday, September 01, 2023  
Location: GREAT FALLS, MT  
Circulation (DMA): 34,000 (N/A)  
Type (Frequency): Magazine (6Y)  
Page: 44,45  
Section: Main  
Keyword: Jim Evans

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for your symptoms to go away before you continue on with any activity.

If you or a travel companion experience any ongoing symptoms that will not go away, including passing out, vomiting or confusion or any other symptoms concerning to you, please seek out medical care. These could be symptoms of a more serious heat illness such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

Allianz Travel Insurance customers can use the free TravelSmart mobile app for one touch dialing to our travel assistance team which can direct you to the closest

appropriate medical facility and we can even arrange transportation and pay for emergency medical treatment.[MSN](#)

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*About Dr. Jim Evans, MD, Senior Medical Consultant, Allianz Partners. Based in Washington, D.C., Dr. Jim Evans, MD practices Emergency Medicine in multiple U.S. states and serves as Senior Medical Consultant at Allianz Partners, where he oversees a team of medical escorts involved in the aeromedical transportation of hundreds of patients on commercial airlines each year. Jim provides medical direction for the care of patients who are seriously injured or become ill when traveling away from home and determines the need for and means of medical evacuation, including by air ambulance.*



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