In Just Five..."Summer Sun Survival Tips for Young and Older Family Members"

Summer is here! As we spend more time outdoors for recreation and travel, here are some effective tips for managing the season's heat and sun in a safe manner:

For Young and Older Children
The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) offers age-specific recommendations for children’s summer well being.

- For babies under six months, the two main recommendations from the AAP to prevent sunburn are to avoid sun exposure, and dress infants in lightweight long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and brimmed hats that shade the neck to prevent sunburn.
- For young children, apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going outside, and use sunscreen even on cloudy days. The SPF should be at least 15 and protect against UVA and UVB rays.
- For older children, the first, and best, line of defense against the sun is covering up. Wear a hat with a three-inch brim or a bill facing forward, sunglasses (look for sunglasses that block 99-100% of ultraviolet rays), and cotton clothing with a tight weave. Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or greater.
- For exercising children, the intensity of activities that last 15 minutes or more should be reduced whenever high heat and humidity reach critical levels. Before prolonged physical activity, the child should be well-hydrated. During the activity, periodic drinking should be enforced.
- More AAP suggestions are available here.

For Older Adults
According to The American Geriatrics Society Foundation for Health in Aging (AGS), hot weather is more likely to cause health problems in older adults than in younger ones. Because of some of the physical changes that occur as we age, older adults can't cool down as well as younger ones... They are also less likely to feel thirsty, even when they are almost dehydrated, which means that their bodies have lost dangerous amounts of water.

- Because older adults may not feel hot, even when it's dangerously warm, they and the people who care for them should check the temperature often during the summer. When temperatures hit 90 degrees Fahrenheit, caregivers should check on older adults, and older people should turn on the air conditioner or go where it's air-conditioned - a shopping mall, grocery store, senior center, movie theatre, museum, or library, for example. Fans aren't enough. Older adults should drink lots of water and other clear liquids that don't contain alcohol or caffeine (these can "dry you out").
- More AGS suggestions are available here.

Visit UA Life & Work Connections for resources in support of your family care responsibilities. Learn more about child care (such as Summer Child Care Resources) and work/life support information by contacting Caryn Jung, MS, Senior Coordinator at jungc@email.arizona.edu or call (520) 621-9870. For information about elder care, contact Jan Sturges, M.Ed., LPC, Caregiving Coordinator at sturgesj@email.arizona.edu or call (520) 626-4770.