



Memorial Medical Center

Making Communities

Healthier®

mmcl.org

MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER NEWS + SUMMER 2022

Keep Your Cool This Summer

By Deborah Pacheco, FNP-BC, MSN, Family Medicine Provider

School's out and that means one thing: summer is officially here! No matter how you choose to enjoy your summer, it's important to stay alert and protect yourself and your family from potential threats to your health and safety.

Topping the list of summertime hazards are extreme heat and drowning. The good news is heat-related illness and water dangers can be easily prevented.

Heat Safety

Extreme heat is the number one weather-related killer in the U.S. and overexposure can be especially dangerous for children, seniors, those with preexisting illnesses and patients on certain types of prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines. There are three major types of heat-related health conditions:

- **Heat cramps** are often the first sign of a heat-related illness and can lead to more serious conditions like heat exhaustion and heat stroke.
- **Heat exhaustion** occurs when your body loses too much water and salt, and can't cool itself. Symptoms can include headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, thirst, heavy sweating, elevated body temperatures, decreased urine output and skin that appears cool, moist, pale, ashen or flushed. If left untreated, heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.
- **Heat stroke** is a medical emergency that occurs when the body has lost excessive amounts of water and salt, and is completely overwhelmed by heat. Characterized by dizziness, fainting, loss of consciousness, slurred speech, confusion, agitation, hallucinations and an altered mental state, a heat stroke requires immediate medical attention, as it can lead to organ failure and death.

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Ask a Doc



German Fierro Perez, MD,
is a pediatrician.

QUESTION: *How can I help ensure my child gets a healthy start to their next school year?*

ANSWER: Great question. It might be summer, but it's not too early to plan how you're setting your child up for a healthy and successful school year. If you haven't yet, schedule your child's annual physical with their pediatrician and ensure they're up to date on their immunizations. Make sure your child is getting the appropriate and healthy amount of sleep so they can function at their best (9-12 hours for ages 6-12 and 8-10 hours for ages 13-18). Establish healthy eating habits by planning out well-balanced meals and pre-portioning healthy breakfasts and lunches as much as you can. Finally, create a healthy homework routine and environment, with a quiet, well-lit space and periodic breaks to help prevent eye, neck and brain fatigue.

Need to schedule your child's annual physical? Call 800.424.DOCS (3627) or visit mmcl.org/schedule to make an appointment.



A note from the CEO

Can you believe we are already halfway through 2022? I hope you are having a happy summer and enjoying the seasonal offerings throughout our community. In this issue, we offer tips to help ensure that this season is a safe and healthy one for you and your family.

Being part of this great community is a privilege and an honor for us, and we are proud to be a leader and contribute to making it a great place to call home. We recently published our annual community benefit report showcasing the many ways we are Making Communities Healthier, both inside and beyond our hospital walls. I'm excited to share some highlights from that report in these pages as well.

As always, thank you for your support and for trusting us with your healthcare. We are always here to serve you with compassionate, quality care that's close to home.

John Harris

Continued from cover

Here are a few simple ways you can beat the heat this summer and help prevent heat-related illnesses:

- Be aware of temperature and humidity levels in your area and avoid going outdoors for activities or exercise in extreme heat.
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water, regardless of how active you are (and remember to keep your pets hydrated too!).
- Always use an SPF-15 or higher sunscreen that protects against both UV-A and UV-B rays, applying 30 minutes prior to exposure and reapplying accordingly.
- NEVER leave infants, children or animals in cars unattended, even if the windows are cracked open.
- Take frequent breaks when enjoying the outdoors, especially if you are not accustomed to working or exercising in a hot environment.
- Break out your favorite lightweight, light-colored and loose-fitting clothing.
- Take advantage of cooler areas (even when outside), and when the temperature rises above 90 degrees, consider switching to an indoor activity.
- Limit or avoid alcoholic beverages, as they can impair your body's ability to self-regulate its temperature and compromise your hydration status.
- Stay mindful of the signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses and know how to respond.

For more detailed information about heat-related illnesses, their symptoms and how to respond, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/index.html>.

Water Safety

Every year in the U.S. there is an estimated average of 11 drowning deaths per day and an estimated average of 22 non-fatal drownings per day. Drowning can happen in seconds and is often silent. And even non-fatal drowning can result in very serious injuries, permanent disabilities and long-term health problems.

Like heat-related illness, drowning can be prevented. Be it poolside, lakeside or beach side, the tips listed below are key to ensuring a fun, safe summer for all:

- Only swim in designated areas supervised by lifeguards.
- Always swim with a buddy, especially if you have a seizure disorder or other medical condition that increases your risk of drowning.
- Never dive in the shallow end of a pool.
- Designate a responsible adult to supervise children closely and constantly when they are in or near water (including bathtubs).
- Make sure young children and inexperienced swimmers always wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets around natural water and swimming pools.
- Always be cautious around natural bodies of water, which can contain hidden hazards like dangerous currents, underwater objects and limited visibility.
- Always wear a life jacket when boating – most boating fatalities occur from drowning.
- Avoid drinking alcohol before or during swimming, boating, and other water activities, and while you're supervising children.
- Don't hyperventilate or hold your breath for long periods of time in water – this can result in "hypoxic blackout" or "shallow water blackout."
- If you have a pool or hot tub, or live near a body of water, always keep reach-and-throw equipment, a cell phone, life jackets and a first aid kit nearby in case of an emergency.

For more information about drowning prevention and statistics about drowning in the U.S., visit <https://www.cdc.gov/drowning/index.html>.

If you or someone you're with shows signs of a heat-related illness or is a victim of a drowning incident, it's important to seek proper medical attention immediately and – in cases of emergency – call 9-1-1.

When emergencies strike, minutes matter. We can provide quality emergency care when you need it most. Visit [mmcl.org](https://www.mmcl.org) to learn more.



Mission Moment

Helping a community in need

We were proud to quickly answer the call in May to aid our sister hospital in Los Alamos. We were able to help feed and support EMS personnel, police and firefighting heroes who were battling severe fires in the region. Supplies from our inventory and other purchased non-perishable food items were delivered to Los Alamos Medical Center.

Special recognition should be given to our supply chain director Linda Wittmayer and supply chain specialist Carlos Valadez, who drove the badly needed supplies to the hospital. ■

Food Safety Checklist

Hosting a cookout? Venturing out for a picnic? Summer means eating in the great outdoors. And no matter what the season, food safety should be first on your ingredients list.

- ✓ **Clean your fruits and veggies and know where they came from.** Give your produce a good washing and make sure they were grown and processed in sanitary conditions.
- ✓ **Thoroughly cook your meat and eggs.** Ensure your eggs have a firm yolk and cook your meat to proper internal temperatures to help kill parasites, bacteria and viruses.
 - 145°F for whole cuts of beef, pork, veal and lamb (and allow meat to rest for three minutes before carving or eating), and for fresh ham (raw) and fin fish (or cook until fish flesh is opaque).
 - 160°F for ground meats like beef and pork
 - 165°F for all poultry (including ground chicken and turkey), and leftovers and casseroles
- ✓ **Avoid cross-contamination.** Keep raw meat, seafood, poultry and eggs separate from produce and other ready-to-eat foods and use separate prep tools and prep dishes.
- ✓ **Cool and store prepared food properly.** And always thaw frozen foods in your fridge, cold water or the microwave – never on the countertop.
- ✓ **Keep foods covered and protected from pests.**
- ✓ **Keep a clean kitchen and food prep area.**

Proud to Be a Community Leader and Good Neighbor

We take pride in not only creating a place where you choose to come for healthcare, but also in making a positive impact in the community we call home. Here are just a few ways we made a difference in 2021.

We added 104 new providers and invested more than \$6.3 million in capital improvements to help ensure that we continue to provide access to quality care and meet your evolving healthcare needs.

We donated more than \$32 million in charity care because we believe that delivering care to all of our neighbors – regardless of their ability to pay – is foundational to our mission of Making Communities Healthier.

We paid more than \$22.6 million in taxes because we take our

role as a community leader seriously and are dedicated to ensuring fiscal responsibility both within and outside our hospital walls.

We distributed a payroll of \$115,728,932 to approximately 1,400 employees as part of our commitment to creating places where physicians want to practice and employees want to work, and where their contributions are valued.

We supported a number of local organizations, including the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, Las Cruces Public Schools and New Mexico State University. As a leader in Southern New Mexico, we are committed to helping our community grow and be the best it can be for all of us.

For more on our community impact, check out our full 2021 Community Benefit Report at mmclc.org/about ■



Memorial Medical Center

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Spicy Asian Salad Cups

Heat up your next get-together with this yummy app!

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| ½ cup light mayonnaise | 4 chopped green onions |
| 1 ½ tsp Dijon mustard | 2 tbsp unsalted, unoiled, chopped nuts (cashews, almonds or walnuts) |
| 1 tsp Chinese chili sauce | ¼ tsp black pepper |
| 2.5 oz canned, salt-free white meat chicken (packed in water, drained) | 2 tsp lime juice or juice from 1 fresh lime |
| 8 oz canned water chestnuts (drained, chopped) | 12 lettuce leaves (iceberg, green leaf, bib, etc.) |

1. In a medium mixing bowl, combine mayonnaise, mustard and chili sauce.
2. Stir in chicken, chestnuts, onions, nuts, pepper and lime juice.
3. Spoon equally into lettuce leaves “cups” and serve.

Makes 2 servings


*Recipe from the American Heart Association. Find more healthy recipes at heart.org/recipes



Meet M. Rizwan Sardar, MD

Cardiologist M. Rizwan Sardar, MD, FACC, FSCAI, is an experienced medical

director with a history of elevating heart care at institutions across the United States. He specializes in interventional cardiology, structural heart disease, peripheral vascular disease and vascular heart disease. His interests include advanced technologies, such as aortic man-made valves, heart pumps and implants to reduce the risk of strokes.

If you need a healthcare professional, call **800.424.DOCS (3627)** or visit mmclc.org and click on Find a Provider. 

*DISCLAIMER: *The information and practices described in this newsletter are not intended as substitutes for a diagnosis or clinical or medical advice prescribed by a medical provider for an individual patient that is based on the individual's history, condition and current medical assessment. This information is not intended to be comprehensive about the subjects addressed and may include information that is time-sensitive and subject to change.*