

## Staying Cool in the Summer Heat

Bright days, bountiful fresh produce, beautiful gardens and at times, some very warm weather. Summertime is one of the most enjoyable seasons on PEI. So how can you beat the heat and fully enjoy a healthy summer season? Below are some tips to help you stay cool and comfortable at home and while traveling.

### Cool at Home

An important way to keep your home cool and comfortable by keeping the heat out of the house.

- Keep the draperies and shades closed on south facing windows during the day to reduce solar heating.
- Tinted windows can also help reflect sunlight from being absorbed.
- Keep healthy trees and bushes around your house as a source of shade.
- Wash only full loads of clothes and dishes to minimize the use of heat producing appliances.
- Thinking about buying an air conditioner? Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency has developed a guide to help you to figure out the size and capacity of the unit needed to cool your house efficiently. *The EnerGuide Room Air Conditioner Directory* is available at [www.oeenrcan.gc.ca](http://www.oeenrcan.gc.ca).

### Cool in the Kitchen

Cooking can be a major source of heat and moisture in your house during the summer. Beat the heat by cooking on an outdoor grill, using the microwave oven or preparing cold meals such as sandwiches, salads or cold plates. Another tip is to use pots and pans with flat bottoms that are the same size as the stove top burner to reduce heat loss into your kitchen. And finally, preheat the oven only when needed, and no peeking! Did you know? Opening the oven door releases warm air into your kitchen and also lowers the temperature of the oven by up to 25 degrees. Use the oven light to check if foods are cooked instead.

### Cool in Car

Air conditioning can make long car trips a treat during the summer months, but it can also increase fuel consumption by up to 20 percent. To beat the cost, Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency recommends that you open the flow through ventilation while driving on the highway. At lower speeds, aerodynamic drag isn't too bad so opening the windows can be an economical way to cool down. Still need the air conditioner? Check the owner's manual to learn how to adjust the vehicle's air conditioner settings to shut off automatically once the interior is cool. Finally, unpack any unnecessary items from your vehicle's trunk to reduce the costs of pulling extra weight.

### Cool Outside

Play it cool outside by wearing light colored, light weight clothing and a wide brimmed hat. During hot and humid days avoid physical exertion whether you are indoors or outside by doing chores or taking your daily walk during the cooler morning or evening hours. Relax in shaded areas particularly between the hours of 11am and 4pm when

the sun's rays are strongest. Try dabbing water on your wrist and other pulse points or a short cool shower to lower your core body temperature after time outdoors.

### **Personal Safety**

Sometimes older people may not even feel hot when the temperature is dangerously high. 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. The key is to drink lots of water and other clear drinks that don't contain alcohol or caffeine. Remember, if your urine is a light yellow color, you're drinking enough water. If it's darker yellow, you need to drink more.

And one final request, please check on your neighbors who may need assistance daily when temperatures are high. Seniors, young children, and people with special needs are particularly susceptible to heat-related illnesses. If someone is suffering from heat illness, please contact a doctor or call 911 in an emergency.