

Press Release No. 57/2008

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Health: Carefree summer

How to enjoy the summer without environmentally-related health problems

Summer, sun, holidays and water play: summertime is the best time of year for many people. But besides fun and relaxation, it can also give rise to health problems related to high ozone levels, heat waves, or ultraviolet radiation. Moreover, ticks which can transmit disease are especially active at this time of year. A new guide titled *Sommer ohne Sorgen [Carefree summer]* on how to handle the downsides of summer has now been published.

Warm summer days can result in environmentally-related health problems for some individuals. The *Sommer ohne Sorgen* guide explains the relationships between summertime environmental influences and health problems which may occur. Readers will also find advice and leads to more information on how to avoid these problems. The following list comprises a few rules of thumb for enjoying a carefree summer:

Remember to drink a lot in hot weather. The best choices are beverages high in mineral content, such as water or tea. Alcohol should be avoided.

Older persons and small children require special attention as they are especially affected by the heat.

Physical exercise and sport is best done on hot days in the early morning or late afternoon. Avoid physical exertion in midday heat.

Take precautionary measures against ultraviolet radiation. The best protection is appropriate clothing and wearing a head covering and sunglasses. Generous application of sun lotion is necessary for any part of the body that is not clothed.

The *Sommer ohne Sorgen* guide (in German) can be downloaded at http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-presse/hintergrund/sommer_ohne_sorgen.pdf. It is a joint publication of the Environment and Health Action Programme (APUG) of the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, Robert Koch Institute, Federal Office for Radiation Protection, and the Federal Environment Agency. For more information see www.apug.de.

Dessau-Roßlau, 1 August 2008