

In A Nutshell
June 2022
Summer in Florida

Many people with MS experience a temporary worsening of their symptoms when the weather is very hot or humid, or when they run a fever. These temporary changes can result from even a slight elevation in core body temperature (one-quarter to one-half of a degree). An elevated temperature further impairs the ability of a demyelinated nerve to conduct electrical impulses.

Activities including sunbathing, exercise, and taking very hot showers or baths can have the same effect. For example, some people notice their vision becomes blurred when they get overheated — a phenomenon known as Uhthoff's sign.

In fact, many years ago the "hot bath" test was used to diagnose multiple sclerosis. A person suspected of having MS was immersed in a hot tub of water, and the appearance of or worsening neurologic symptoms was taken as evidence the person had MS.

Heat generally produces only temporary worsening of symptoms. It does not cause more disease activity (demyelination or damage to the nerves themselves). The symptoms improve after you cool down.

Here are some strategies to lessen the effects of heat:

- Stay in an air-conditioned environment during periods of extreme heat and humidity. If an air conditioner is needed to help minimize symptoms, the cost of this equipment may be tax deductible if your healthcare provider has written a prescription for it.
- Use cooling products such as vests, neck wraps, and bandana during exercise or outdoor activity.
- Wear lightweight, loose, breathable clothing.
- Drink cold fluids and eat popsicles.
- Exercise in a cool pool (<85 degrees) or a cool environment. If you are exercising outside, pick cooler times of the day, usually early morning or evening.
- Try pre- and post-cooling to decrease the heating effects of exercise. Get into a bathtub of tepid water and continue adding cooler water over a period of 20 to 30 minutes. A cool bath or shower can also help reduce core body temperature following activity or exposure to a hot environment

Just for Fun

What will you do to combat the heat index that is rapidly gaining speed as we are now into the month of June?

Maybe purchase one of these supplies:

[cooling equipment info and nat vendor list.pdf \(azureedge.net\)](#)

Maybe find one of the 59 Adult pools in The Villages that is near to you. I believe that most include a chair lift.

[CentersPools.pdf \(districtgov.org\)](#)