

# HOW TO STAY COMFORTABLE AND SAFE DURING THE HOT SUMMER

**Stay hydrated.** Drink at least a cup of water every 20-30 minutes during extreme heat periods in the summer, even if you aren't thirsty. Avoid soft drinks, caffeine, and alcoholic beverages. The idea that an ice cold soda pop is the perfect solution to thirst is a **delusion** encouraged by advertising. The more soda pop you drink, the more thirsty you will be, the hotter you will feel, and thus the more uncomfortable you will be. Soft drink advertisements are LIES! "Sugar free" drinks are as bad as the sugared versions.

**Cook outside to avoid increasing the heat and humidity inside your house.** Eat small, light meals, spaced throughout the day, rather than 2 or 3 big heavy meals.

**Dress for the season.** Wear shorts and a light shirt. Loose fitting clothes are cooler and more comfortable than tight fitting garments. Go barefoot or wear sandals. Natural fabrics are cooler than synthetics. At night, use light cotton sheets on your bed. Minimize indoor fabrics, as fabric increases interior humidity.

**If the heat becomes oppressive, douse your head, arms, and feet with cool water, or take a cool shower.** Or go outside and douse yourself with a water hose. Keep a spray bottle of cool water handy, and give yourself spritzes of cool water. Dip cloths in cool water and wrap around your neck, wrists, and ankles.

**Shade is your friend. Keep the sun's heat from hitting windows, doors, walls. Shade the outside of the windows.** Indoor curtains are not enough (although they help). Once the sun hits the glass and window frame, the heat gets inside the house, even if you have curtains. Use auto sun shades to make a cheap outdoor window shade. Duct tape two or three of them together (depending on the size of the window). Hang them on the *outside* of the windows. An roll-up window shade also works fine. One or more curtains inside will help. Choose white or another light color (sheets are do-able and cheap). Shade the doors. Shade your walls with plants. It takes many years to grow a tall tree, but vines like Morning Glories grow fast.

**If you have no air conditioning, ventilate your house at night. Keep the house closed up during the day until the inside and outside temperatures are the same.** Then open up the windows and doors. If practical for your situation, during the day only open windows and doors that are shaded. At night put box fans in

the south and west windows to pull hot air out of the house. Put box fans in north or east windows to draw in cooler air. Open every window and door to facilitate cross breezes. In the morning, close your windows and doors when the temperature outside is the same as the temperature inside.

**Keep the air moving around inside.** Use fans to create breezes during the day and the night. Moving air makes you feel 10 degrees cooler than the actual temperature. Use fans even if you have an air conditioner. With fan breezes inside, you can set the thermostat higher than would be the case without the fans, and maintain comfort..

**Minimize heat buildup inside the house.** Watch out for anything that creates heat inside the house:

- ★ If you have a dishwasher, don't use it or at minimum don't use the heat dry at the end of the cycle. Take cool showers.
- ★ Many electronic devices such as "instant on" televisions draw current all the time, and thus create heat all the time. Plug them into an electrical outlet strip and turn it off and on with the switch on the strip. This will eliminate those unnecessary "hot plates" that add heat to the indoor climate.
- ★ Don't use the clothes dryer, hang your clothes on a line outside to dry.
- ★ If you smoke, do so outside.
- ★ Turn your computers off when they are not in use.
- ★ **COOK OUTSIDE!**
- ★ Replace your incandescent lights with compact fluorescent bulbs.

**Shade the outside parts of your air conditioner.** If the air conditioner is in bright sunlight, it will work less efficiently. Shade the compressor or the outside part of a window AC with an awning. Don't block the air intakes.

**For more energy conservation ideas, visit our website**

**[www.energyconservationinfo.org](http://www.energyconservationinfo.org)**

**✚ Oscar Romero Catholic Worker House in Oklahoma City ✚**

**[www.justpeace.org](http://www.justpeace.org) ✚ [www.bettertimesinfo.org](http://www.bettertimesinfo.org)**