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## Summer Heat: No Sweat

Hot, sticky summers in Louisiana are nothing to sweat about ... if you're prepared. Heat exhaustion and heat stroke frequently go hand in hand during the summer months, particularly here in Louisiana where extreme temperatures are often the norm.

To get the most out of your summer fun and fitness, it's important to take precautions during hot weather. Even if you don't notice the heat, your body will.

Exercising in the heat can put a great deal of stress on your body, particularly on your heart and lungs. Under normal conditions your blood vessels and perspiration level can adjust to the heat, but exercise and high temperatures challenge the body's natural coolant system. The result may be heat exhaustion, heat stroke or other heat-related illnesses.

To avoid these potentially life-threatening situations, use common sense when exercising in the heat.

Follow some of these tips:

- **Hydrate with water and sports drinks:** Cool your body with plenty of water and liquids before, during and after your workout. These drinks help to replace fluid and minerals lost through heavy sweating.
- **Wear lightweight, cool clothing:** It's important to wear loose-fitting, light-colored clothing that allows sweat to evaporate.
- **Exercise during cooler hours:** Adjust your exercise schedule for early morning or late evening workouts. Better yet, consider exercising indoors on hot or humid days.
- **Avoid alcohol and caffeine:** These drinks can actually promote the loss of fluid and should be avoided prior to exercising.

If you begin to cramp or feel weak, dizzy or nauseous while working out in hot, humid temperatures, you may be experiencing a heat-related illness. If you have these symptoms, get out of the heat quickly and drink plenty of liquids.

Children are extremely susceptible to the heat; if a child shows signs of heat stroke, seek medical care immediately. In the meantime, bring the child indoors or into the shade and have them lie down and elevate their feet. If the child is alert, provide a cool drink and cool their body off with a sponge bath, or if possible, place them in cool water.

Sources: [www.KidsHealth.org](http://www.KidsHealth.org); [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)

### Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

- Increased sweating
- Muscle weakness
- Severe thirst
- Cool, clammy skin
- Fast breathing
- Headache

### Symptoms of Heat Stroke

- Dizziness or confusion
- May not be sweating
- Flushed, hot dry skin
- Difficulty breathing
- Severe headache

Source: [www.KidsHealth.org](http://www.KidsHealth.org)



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## 2 Step 4 Kids Website Launched

Blue Cross is taking another step to promote health and wellness to Louisiana residents with the expansion of its Louisiana 2 Step program, created last year to encourage people to take two simple steps — *eat right* and *move more*.

Blue Cross is now bringing the Louisiana 2 Step message to children with an exciting, age-appropriate website, [www.2Step4Kids.com](http://www.2Step4Kids.com), to educate kids age five to 12 on steps to better health. The 2 Step 4 Kids site serves as companion to the [www.Louisiana2Step.com](http://www.Louisiana2Step.com) site launched last year for adults.

The 2 Step 4 Kids website encourages and educates youngsters through games and interactive fun. Schools and youth organizations may sign up as teams and set goals to challenge and motivate their students. The

free site also includes a resource area for parents and teachers, with careful attention paid to safeguarding children who come to the website.

Nearly 10,000 Louisianians have registered on the adult-focused Louisiana 2 Step website and taken advantage of online tools such as food and activity logs, healthy recipes and a calendar of health and fitness events throughout Louisiana.



Check out [www.2Step4Kids.com](http://www.2Step4Kids.com); it's fun for kids of all ages. And if you haven't yet signed up at [www.Louisiana2Step.com](http://www.Louisiana2Step.com), register today and learn how to Do the 2!

## Health Facts

Need another reason to do the Louisiana 2 Step? Consider these recent rankings, published by the Congressional Quarterly Inc.-owned CQ Press in its report "Health Care State Rankings 2008: Health Care Across America."

Louisiana is the second *unhealthiest* state in the nation and ranks 12th in the number of obese adults, according to the publication. Louisiana also ranks at the top of the list — at No. 2 — in the percentage of adults who do not exercise. CQ Press used 21 factors to determine the healthiest and unhealthiest states. To learn more about Blue Cross' Louisiana 2 Step program and how to *eat right* and *move more*, visit [www.Louisiana2Step.com](http://www.Louisiana2Step.com).



## Answers at Your Fingertips



Do you have a question about healthcare? Just click on the **Answer Button** at [www.bcbsla.com](http://www.bcbsla.com) day or night for answers.

When you click on the Answer Button, you'll be taken to a list of online health and wellness tools and coverage information. You'll find answers to questions such as:

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