

HEAT SAFETY

A Heat Wave usually consists of high temperatures and high relative humidity. This combination makes it difficult for the human body to eliminate heat through the skin and sweat glands. Sweating will not cool the human body unless the water is removed by evaporation. High relative humidity consequently inhibits evaporation. Certain medications can also make it difficult for a person to sweat.

PEOPLE AT GREATEST RISK DURING EXTREME HEAT EVENTS

Older adults, people on certain medications including psychotropic drugs, isolated individuals who live alone and seldom leave their home, infants and young children, persons with chronic heart or lung problems, overweight people, persons with disabilities and people who work outside are at a greater risk during extreme heat events.

SYMPTOMS OF HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS AND WHAT TO DO

Heat Cramps- Cramps or muscle spasms in the abdomen, arms or legs.

Solution: Stop activity, cool down and drink clear juice or sports drink.

Heat Exhaustion- Heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, fainting.

Solution: Cool down; seek medical attention if person has heart problems or high blood pressure.

Heat Stroke- Extremely high body temperature, red, hot, dry skin, rapid pulse, throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion, unconsciousness

Solution: Call 911 and cool the victim with shower or hose until help arrives.

WHAT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY CAN DO

- Slow down (reduce outdoor activities).
- Dress for summer (wear lightweight light-colored clothing).
- Drink plenty of water or other non-alcohol (check with your doctor if you are on medications or have a problem with fluid retention).
- Spend more time in air conditioned places (if your home doesn't have air conditioning, spend some time in an air conditioned facility during the worst of the heat, or sit in a bathtub containing cool water).
- Stay out of the sun as much as possible (sunburn makes it more difficult to cool off).
- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial TV or radio, or cable TV for the latest forecasts and heat index values.