

## HEAT WARNING

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Keeping cool is not just about comfort. Dangerously high temperatures can result in heat-related illnesses ranging from heat cramps to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Although anyone can suffer from heat illnesses, some people are at greater risk than others. Included among these are:

- Infants and young children
- People age 65 and older, especially those isolated.
- Persons with chronic illnesses such as heart and lung disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, and Parkinson's disease.
- People who have mental illness and/or are on medication for these conditions.
- Cognitively impaired people
- People living alone
- People without air conditioning or fans; those reluctant to open their windows.
- Those with impaired mobility (difficulty getting around).

### **THE BEST DEFENSE IS PREVENTION!! HERE ARE SOME PREVENTION TIPS:**

Drink more fluids (non-alcoholic), no matter what your activity level. Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink. If you are on a fluid restriction, or if you take "water pills", check with your doctor to make sure it is OK to increase your fluid intake.

Don't drink fluids containing caffeine, alcohol, or large amounts of sugar — these can actually lead to dehydration. Avoid **VERY COLD** drinks, as these can cause stomach cramps.

Stay indoors and if possible in air-conditioning. If you don't have air-conditioning, try to get to a friend or relative who has air-conditioning, or you can call your local public health department to find out where spots are that are cool.

Electric fans can help, but when the temperature is above 90, they do not prevent heat-related illness. When it is this hot, fans should be pointed out of windows to blow the hot air out. Keep blinds/curtains over windows with direct sunlight.

To cool down, take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath. You can also wrap yourself in a wet sheet with a fan blowing on you.

Wear loose fitting, light colored clothing, preferably cotton. Use an umbrella or hat with a wide brim to block out the sun.

Fill a spray bottle with water and keep it in the refrigerator for a quick refreshing spray.

Eat light, cool foods rather than heavy, hot and spicy foods. Eat small frequent meals. Plan necessary outdoor activities for early AM or later in the day when it is cooler. If you are isolated, ask neighbors or relatives to call or stop by and check on you. If you are OK, please check on others who might be vulnerable.

### **SYMPTOMS OF HEAT ILLNESS TO WATCH FOR AND HOW TO RESPOND:**

Heat Cramps: Painful spasms, usually in leg and abdominal muscles, and heavy sweating.

**Move the person to a cooler location, lightly stretch and gently massage the affected muscles, give sips of water every 15 minutes, and call the doctor if symptoms persist.**

Heat exhaustion: Includes heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, or vomiting, fainting, skin may be cool or moist, pulse rate may be fast or weak.

**Get person to a cooler location, loosen or remove clothing, apply cool wet cloths or assist into a cool shower or with a sponge bath, give 1/2 glass cool water every 15 minutes, seek immediate medical attention if vomiting occurs or symptoms persist.**

Heat Stroke (a severe medical emergency): Symptoms include an extremely high body temperature (above 101), red, hot or dry skin, but no sweating, rapid strong pulse, throbbing headache, dizziness, and nausea.

**Call 911 or get person to a hospital immediately, Move to a cooler environment, remove clothing, assist with a cool bath, sponging, or wet sheet to reduce body temperature while waiting for 911 to respond.**

The summer months are fast approaching, please take of yourselves and each other.