

Stay Healthy in the Heat



groups are more vulnerable, including young children, elderly adults, people who are overweight, people with medical conditions (diabetes, high blood pressure, heart problems, lung problems or mental illness), people who take

certain medications for high blood pressure, and people who work in hot conditions. dangerous level. The heat index combines high temperatures and humidity to let you know how hot it feels outside. A heat advisory is when the heat index is expected to be at least 100° for three hours or more. A heat warning is when the heat index is expected to be at least 105° for three hours or more. The two main types of heat illness include heat exhaustion and the more serious heat stroke.

While the hot days this summer can be fun at the beach or pool, excessive heat can cause health problems, including heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The Berrien County Health Department and Michigan Department of Community Health urge everyone to take precautions this summer to make sure they keep cool and safe.

The best way to avoid heat illness is to stay cool and hydrated. If you do not have air conditioning in your home, find a public place to go for a few hours such as a mall or library. If you must stay home, take a cool shower or bath, and cover windows with curtains or shades to keep the sunlight from coming in. When going in the sun, wear light, loose-fitting clothing and use sunscreen. In any circumstances, make sure to drink enough water to stay hydrated. In extreme heat, avoid drinks that contain alcohol or lots of sugar, as they will not hydrate your body. Most importantly, never leave children (or pets) in a parked car! Check up on elderly or otherwise vulnerable family and neighbors during hot days to make sure they are not suffering from heat illness.

The National Weather Service issues heat advisories and warnings when the heat index is expected to rise to a

Heat Exhaustion is characterized by heavy sweating, cramps, tiredness, weakness, headache, cool and moist skin, fast and weak pulse, fast breathing, nausea, and fainting. If someone may be suffering from heat exhaustion, get them out of the sun, lay them down and loosen their clothing. Apply cool, wet cloths. Give sips of a cool, non-alcoholic drink. Get medical help right away for infants, the elderly or if the person has a medical condition. You should also get medical help right away if the symptoms worsen or last longer than an hour. Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke!

Heat Stroke is a more serious condition in which skin that feels hot and dry but not sweaty. A person suffering from heat stroke will have a high body temperature (above 103°), a rapid, strong pulse, and a throbbing headache. Heat stroke also causes dizziness, nausea, confusion, and unconsciousness. If you suspect someone may be having a heat stroke, call 911 and get medical help right away! Heat stroke can cause death. Move the person into a shady area and put them in a tub of cool water, shower them with a garden hose, or use any other method to cool them rapidly. Do not give the person alcohol to drink.



Very hot days, with temperatures in the upper 80's and above, can cause body temperature to rise, possibly resulting in muscle cramps, dizziness and even death. Heat illness can occur when your body cannot cool down, which is why it is so important to understand how to protect yourself and your family in extreme temperatures.

The body normally cools down by sweating. During extremely hot weather, when sweating isn't enough to cool the body, you can become overheated to the point of becoming ill. Heat illness can cause you to become very sick, and could even cause death. While anyone can be affected by heat illness, certain



For more information, call the Health Department at 926-7121.

