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Beat the Heat: Prevent Heat-Related Illnesses

Northwest Ohio is bracing for dangerously high temperatures next week. The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department urges everyone to take special precautions to prevent heat-related illnesses, including heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

“Exposure to excessive heat can pose a serious health risk for everyone, particularly the elderly, the very young, and individuals with chronic health conditions,” said Health Commissioner Karim Baroudi. “When the proper precautions are taken, heat-related illnesses are preventable.”

Here are some tips to follow during periods of high temperatures and high humidity:

Be a Good Neighbor

- Family, friends, and neighbors are urged to periodically check on the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions since they are among those at highest risk for heat-related illnesses.
- Encourage them to stay in air-conditioned environments as much as possible, and to look for an air-conditioned shelter if necessary.
- Recommend that they take cool showers or baths to cool down.
- Tell them to seek medical care immediately if they have symptoms of heat-related illness like muscle cramps, headaches, nausea or vomiting.

Drink Cool Fluids

- Help your body sweat and cool down by staying well hydrated with water. Don't wait until you are thirsty before you start drinking water.
- Adults should drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water each day. Monitor your body – you may need to drink more on hot and humid days.
- Drink from two to four cups of water every hour while working or exercising outside.
- Avoid fluids that contain alcohol or caffeine, because they can add to dehydration and increase the effects of heat illness.

Monitor or Limit Outdoor Activities

- Plan outdoor activities for the early morning or evening when the sun is less direct.
- Wear loose-fitting, light-colored clothing.
- A wide-brimmed hat protects against sunburn and helps keep the body cooler.
- Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen that protects against UV-A and UV-B rays and has a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15.
- Move to the shade or into an air-conditioned building at the first signs of heat illness.

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- Very young children may become preoccupied with outdoor play and not realize that they are getting overheated. Adults should require frequent breaks and bring them indoors for a cool drink.
- Children or youths involved in team sports should be closely monitored for signs of heat stress. Consideration should be given to shifting practices and games to cooler times of the day.

Know the Signs of Heat Exhaustion (serious)

- Heavy sweating, nausea or vomiting, muscle cramps, dizziness, headache, and cold, pale, or clammy skin are all associated signs of heat exhaustion.
- People experiencing heat should move to a cool place, loosen clothes, sip water, and put cool cloths on their body.
- Medical help should be contacted if the individual is throwing up, symptoms are worsening and/or lasting longer than 1 hour.

Know the Signs of Heat Stroke (life-threatening)

- Heat stroke is a potentially life-threatening condition, characterized by a body temperature of 103 degrees or higher; red, hot and dry skin with no sweating; rapid pulse; headache; dizziness; nausea; confusion; unconsciousness; and gray skin color.
- People experiencing heat stroke need immediate medical assistance – call 911.
- Before help arrives, begin cooling the victim by any means possible, such as spray from a garden hose or by placing the person in a cool tub of water.

Don't Forget Your Pets

- Animals kept outdoors should have plenty of fresh water and a covered area to get out of the sun and cool down.
- Never leave pets in vehicles. Even if the windows are cracked open, interior temperatures can rise almost 20 degrees within the first 10 minutes.

Additional information on heat-related illness can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/index.html>

[Residents can find their nearest cooling center here.](#)

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