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Phone/Fax:
(217) 283-9348

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IDPH director lists cool ideas for coping with summer heat

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Dr. Eric E. Whitaker, state public health director, today reminded Illinoisans to take precautions during extremely hot weather to avoid serious health problems.

“Periods of extremely hot weather, such as what we are experiencing now in Illinois, can lead to serious health problems,” Whitaker said. “Prevention is the best defense against heat-related illness. Staying cool, increasing your fluid intake, decreasing your activities and wearing appropriate clothing can help your body cope with high temperatures.”

Normally, the body cools itself by sweating. If tem-

peratures and humidity are extremely high, however, sweating is not effective in maintaining the body's normal temperature. If the body does not cool properly or does not cool enough, a person may suffer a heat-related illness. Heat-related illnesses can become serious or even deadly if unattended.

Whitaker offered the following prevention tips to beat the heat and any related illness:

- Drink more fluids regardless of your activity level. Do not wait until you're thirsty to drink. Make an extra effort to drink a minimum of six to eight 8 oz. glasses of cool fluids daily. During heavy exercise in a hot environment, drink two to four glasses of cool fluids each hour. Parents should be sure young children get sufficient fluids. If you are on a special fluid-restricted diet or if you take diuretics, ask your physician about fluid intake during hot weather.

- Avoid liquids that contain caffeine, alcohol or large amounts of sugar – they cause you to lose more body fluid. Also, avoid very cold drinks because they can cause stomach cramps.

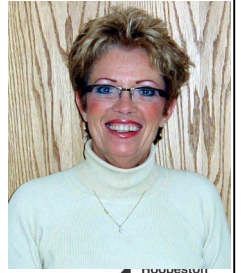
- Stay indoors and, if at all possible, stay in an air-conditioned place. If your home does not have air conditioning, go to a public place that does have air conditioning. Seek out the nearest facility that is air conditioned, such as a cooling shelter, a senior citizen center, a church, a mall, the local YMCA or a center designated by your community. Even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat. Fans alone will not effectively cool an overheated person when air temperatures are above 90 degrees F.

- Take cool showers, baths or sponge baths, which can reduce body temperatures. In addition, wet clothing has

See HEAT on other side

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Heat continued from other side

a cooling effect.

- Protect your body. Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. When spending time outdoors, avoid direct sunlight, wear a hat and use a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) greater than 15 to protect yourself against sunburn.

- Never leave anyone, including pets, alone in a closed, parked vehicle. The air temperature inside a car rises rapidly during hot weather and can lead to brain damage or death.

If you must go outside:

- Slow down and avoid strenuous activity. Do strenuous activity during the early morning or late evening hours when it is cooler.

- Take regular breaks when engaged in physical activity on warm days. Try to rest often in shady or cool areas. If you recognize that you, or someone else, is showing signs of a heat-related illness, stop activity and find a cool place.

Although anyone can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others. Check regularly on Infants and young children, people 65 or older, those who have mental illness and people who are physically ill, especially with heart disease or high blood pressure.

The following are commonly asked questions about heat-related conditions.

What are some of the most common heat-related conditions?

Obituaries

MADDOX—Eileen Kellogg Ellis Maddox, 96, of Rankin died Sunday, July 31, 2005 at home. Funeral services will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Rankin United Methodist Church. Burial will be in Rankin Union Cemetery. Visitation will be 4-8 p.m. Tuesday at Knapp Funeral Home, Rankin. Memorials are suggested to the Rankin Library, Rankin Lions Club and the church.

STEPHEN—Eleanor J. Stephen, 78, of Hoopeston died at 11 p.m. Saturday, July 30, 2005 at Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital. Private family graveside services were Monday at Floral Hill Cemetery. There was no visitation. Brown-Alkire Funeral

The most common heat-related conditions are heatstroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, sunburn and heat rash. Heatstroke and heat exhaustion are the most serious conditions.

What is heatstroke?

Heatstroke occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: the body's temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails and the body is unable to cool down. Body temperature may rise to 106 degrees or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heatstroke can result from overexposure to direct sunlight, with or without physical activity, or to very high indoor temperatures. It can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not given.

What are the symptoms of heatstroke and how are they treated?

Symptoms of heatstroke include an extremely high body temperature (above 103 degrees F, orally); red, hot and dry skin; rapid pulse; throbbing headache; dizziness; nausea; confusion; and unconsciousness.

If symptoms of heatstroke are present, find a cool place, preferably an air-conditioned indoor setting. Outside, find a spot in the shade. Put the person in a semi-sitting position. Loosen his or her clothing and bathe the head and body with cold water. Seek medical attention immediately.

What is heat exhaustion?

Heat exhaustion can result when too much time is spent in a very warm environment, resulting in excessive sweating without adequate fluid and electrolyte (salt and minerals) replacement. This can occur either indoors or outdoors, with or without exercise.

What are the symptoms of heat exhaustion and how are they treated?

Symptoms of heat exhaustion may include dizziness, headache, nausea, abdominal cramps, shallow breathing, cool and clammy skin, muscle tremors and heavy perspiration.

Weather



Mostly sunny today. High 92. Tonight mostly clear. Low 68. Tomorrow, partly cloudy. High 91, low 69.

For current weather conditions, call Hoopeston Weather Service, (217) 283-6221.

A person suffering from heat exhaustion should be moved to an air-conditioned environment if possible. If outside, move the person to a shady spot. Loosen the person's clothing and encourage him or her to drink cool, non-alcoholic, decaffeinated beverages.

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