



**Commonwealth of Kentucky  
Cabinet for Health and Family Services**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**State Health Officials Issue Safety Guidelines  
for Warmer Temperatures**

*High temperatures can lead to serious heat-related illness*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Jul. 19, 2019)** – Health officials with the Department for Public Health (DPH), located within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), urge the public to take steps to avoid injury and illness during periods of extreme summertime heat.

“During summer we often spend long periods of time outside. However, with warmer extreme temperatures comes the risk of overexertion, so we advise the public to take steps to keep cool and prevent harm,” said Jeff Howard, DPH Commissioner. “Serious injury and even death – particularly for children and older adults exposed to extreme levels of heat – can occur.”

Here are some tips to avoid heat-related injury and illness:

- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Increase your normal fluid intake regardless of your activity level. You will need to drink more fluids than your thirst level indicates. This is especially true for people age 65 or older who often have a decreased ability to respond to external temperature changes. In addition, avoid drinking beverages containing alcohol, because they will actually cause you to lose more fluid.
- **Wear appropriate clothing and sunscreen.** Choose lightweight, light colored, loose fitting clothing. In the hot sun, wear a wide-brimmed hat that will provide shade and keep the head cool. Sunscreen should be SPF 15 or greater, and should be applied 30 minutes before going out into the sun.
- **Stay cool indoors.** The most efficient way to beat the heat is to stay in an air-conditioned area. If you do not have an air conditioner, consider visiting a mall or public library.
- **Schedule outdoor activities carefully.** If you must be out in the heat, try to plan your activities so that you are outdoors either before noon or in the evening. Rest periodically so your body's thermostat has a chance to recover.
- **Do not keep children or pets in cars.** Temperatures inside a car without open windows can reach over 150 degrees quickly, resulting in heat stroke and death.
- **Use a buddy system.** When working in the heat, monitor the condition of your co-workers and have someone do the same for you. Heat-induced illness can cause a person to become confused or lose consciousness.
- **Check on your neighbors and monitor those at high risk.** Those at greatest risk of heat-related illness include:
  - Infants and children up to 4 years of age
  - People 65 years of age or older
  - People who are overweight
  - People who overexert during work or exercise

- People who are ill or on certain medications for blood pressure or diuretics

Signs and symptoms of heat-related illness include:

- **Dehydration** – Dehydration is caused by excessive loss of water and salts from the body. Severe dehydration can become life-threatening if not treated.
- **Heat Cramps** – Heat cramps are painful, involuntary muscle spasms often occurring in your calves, abdomen and back. Rest for several hours and drink clear juice or an electrolyte-containing drink.
- **Heat Exhaustion** – Heat exhaustion occurs when the body loses too much water and salt from sweating during hot temperatures. Older adults, people who work outside and those with high blood pressure are most at risk for heat exhaustion. Continued exposure may lead to heat stroke, which is life threatening.
- **Heat Stroke** – Heat stroke is caused by prolonged exposure to high temperatures or by performing physical activity in hot weather. Sweating has usually stopped and your body temperature becomes too high. Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition and you should call 911 and seek immediate medical attention for this illness.

For more information on preventing heat-related illness visit

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

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*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health, the Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*

