

# High Heat

## PREPAREDNESS



Heat kills by pushing the body beyond its limits. Under normal conditions, the body's internal thermostat produces perspiration that evaporates and cools the body. However, in extreme heat and high humidity, evaporation is lowered and the body must work extra hard to maintain a normal temperature.

Children under the age of five and the elderly are more susceptible to the effects of heat.

### Heat terms of the National Weather Service

A **Heat Advisory** is issued when the heat index is expected to be between 105-115 for less than 3 hours in a day.

An **Excessive Heat Warning** is issued when the heat index is expected to exceed 115 degrees during the day or the heat index will exceed 105 degrees for more than 3 hours for two consecutive days.

The **Heat Index** is what the temperature feels like to the human body based on both the air temperature and humidity.

### Heat Facts . . .

- In a normal year, approximately 175 Americans die from extreme heat.
- Men sweat more than women and are more susceptible to heat illness because they can more quickly become dehydrated.
- Sunburn can significantly slow the skin's ability to release excess heat

### WHAT YOU CAN DO . . .

- ☞ Stay indoors as much as possible
- ☞ Spend whatever time possible in air conditioning - if air conditioning is not available stay on the lowest floor out of the sunshine or go to a public building where air conditioning is available.
- ☞ Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing. Light colors reflect more of the sun's energy than dark colors.
- ☞ Drink plenty of fluids. Water's the best. Avoid drinks containing alcohol or caffeine.
- ☞ Eat light meals spread out over the day.
- ☞ Reduce activity levels when possible in hot weather.
- ☞ Avoid using salt tablets unless directed by a physician.
- ☞ Avoid getting sunburned - use protection if you must go outside.

*Watch out for others. Check on your neighbors and family - especially those who are elderly and/ or children. High heat can kill.*

*Parents and caretakers should be careful not to overdress children and to give them plenty of fluids.*

## IN YOUR HOME . . .

- ☞ Protect windows. Shades, draperies, awnings or louvers on windows can reduce the effects of the morning or afternoon sun by as much as 80%.
- ☞ Install temporary reflectors, such as aluminum foil covered cardboard to reflect any heat back outside.
- ☞ Keep the cool air inside by weather-stripping doors and windowsills.
- ☞ Storm windows can keep the heat of a house in the summer out the same way they keep the cold out in the winter.
- ☞ Inspect, clean or replace your air conditioner filters regularly.
- ☞ Heavy use of air conditioners and other electrical devices may contribute to power outages or reductions. Turn off what electrical devices you don't need.
- ☞ Check central air conditioning ducts for proper installation.
- ☞ Insulate spaces around window air conditioners.
- ☞ Close any floor heat registers.

Don't leave children, a frail elderly or disabled person or pets in an enclosed car -- not even for a minute -- as temperatures can quickly climb to dangerous levels.

## HEAT DISORDERS . . .

**Sunburn** - Symptoms: skin redness and pain, possible swelling, blisters, fever, headaches.

First Aid: take a shower, using soap to remove oils that may block pores, preventing the body from cooling naturally. If blisters occur, apply dry, sterile dressings and get medical attention.

**Heat Cramps** - Symptoms: painful spasms usually in leg and abdominal muscles. Heavy sweating.

First Aid: firm pressure on cramping muscles or gentle massage to relieve spasm. Give sips of water. If nausea occurs, discontinue.

**Heat Exhaustion** - Symptoms: heavy sweating, weakness, skin cold, pale and clammy. Weak pulse. Normal temperature possible. Fainting, vomiting.

First Aid: get victim to lie down in a cool place. Loosen clothing. Apply cool, wet cloths. Fan or move victim to air-conditioned place. Give sips of water. If nausea occurs, discontinue. If vomiting occurs, seek immediate medical attention.

**Heat Stroke (Sun Stroke)** - Symptoms: high body temperature (106°+). Hot, dry skin. Rapid, strong pulse. Possible unconsciousness. Victim will likely not sweat.

First aid: This is a severe medical emergency. Call the emergency medical service by dialing 9-1-1. Delay can be fatal. **Do not give fluids.** Move victim to cooler environment. Cool bath or sponging may reduce body temperature before ambulance arrives. Use extreme caution.

