



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

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NEWS RELEASE--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Niki Forbing-Orr
Public Information Officer
(208) 334-0668

Record-setting temperatures prompt a public health warning

Idaho public health officials are encouraging people to be aware and take steps to keep cool in the record-setting heat predicted around the state this weekend and into early next week.

Too much heat and too little water can lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke, even for otherwise healthy people. Those at the highest risk for heat-related injuries or illness are babies and children up to age 4, people 65 and older, and anyone who is overweight, sick or on certain medications. But everyone should take precautions to stay as cool as possible and modify time spent outdoors in extreme heat.

"It's important to plan your outdoor physical activities for the mornings, when it's cooler," said Elke Shaw-Tulloch, state health officer and administrator for the Division of Public Health. "Try to stay in the shade as much as possible, and drink plenty of fluids. Also, be sure to check on neighbors who are elderly or disabled and might need help in extreme heat."

Advanced age, obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation and even sunburn also can hinder the body's ability to cool down in extreme temperatures.

Other tips for keeping cool in extreme heat:

- Stay inside air-conditioned buildings as often as possible. If you don't have air-conditioning in your home, head to the mall or library or another public place that does.
- Drink more water than normal, regardless of your activity level. Avoid alcohol, caffeine and sugary beverages.
- Stay out of the sun as much as possible. Also, protect yourself from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses and by using sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher (the most effective products say "broad spectrum" or "UVA/UVB protection" on their labels).
- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- If you feel overheated, take a cool shower or bath.

- Check on family, friends and neighbors who are elderly, ill or disabled.
- Never leave children or pets in a parked car – not even for very short periods of time.

Heat exhaustion can develop after several days of high temperatures and inadequate replacement of body fluids. The elderly, people with high blood pressure, and those working or exercising outside are more prone to heat exhaustion. Signs include:

- Dizziness
- Sweating heavily
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Nausea or vomiting
- Headache

If you suspect heat exhaustion, immediately get the person out of the heat and cool him or her down.

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. It occurs when your body is unable to control its temperature to cool down. Heat stroke can come on quickly and cause death or permanent disability. Signs of heat stroke include the previous signs of heat exhaustion as well as:

- Difficulty breathing
- Not sweating
- Hallucinations
- Feelings of disorientation or loss of consciousness
- Rapid, weak pulse
- High body temperature (>103 degrees F)

If you suspect heat stroke, call 911 or your local emergency number. Then immediately move the person out of the heat and cool him or her by whatever means available, including:

- Putting the person in a cool tub of water or a cool shower.
- Sponging the person with cool water.
- Fanning the person while misting him or her with cool water.
- Placing ice packs or cool wet towels on the neck, armpits and groin.
- Covering the person with cool damp sheets.

Let the person drink cool water or other nonalcoholic drinks without caffeine if he or she is able. CPR should be started if the person loses consciousness and is not breathing.

For more information, visit <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heattips.asp>

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