

# **News Release**

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## **Staying cool important for good health**

When the dog days of summer deliver hot temperatures and high humidity like we have been experiencing this week, staying cool is more than a matter of comfort, it is a matter of good health.

“It’s important to be aware that some medical conditions and medications can affect your body temperature,” said Health Commissioner Julie Miller. “Conditions such as heart disease, alcoholism, respiratory disease and diabetes can make it easier for the body to overheat, increasing the possibility of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.”

According to the Ohio Department of Mental Health, medications that can affect the body’s ability to deal with excessive heat include almost all psychotropic drugs, diuretics, anti-Parkinson medications, amphetamines, beta-blockers and narcotic pain medications. Common psychotropic medications include Cymbalta, Effexor, Lexapro, Paxil, Prozac, Seroquel, Wellbutrin, Zyban and Zoloft.

“People should be aware of the possible side effects of their medications and avoid high-heat situations,” said Miller. Certain medications for intestinal disorders or antihistamines can make it more difficult to perspire. Other medications, such as decongestants or those with stimulants like caffeine, can increase your internal heat load.

Miller advised checking with a pharmacist to see if any medications you are taking warrant extra precautions in the hot weather.

Signs of heat-related illnesses include heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea or fainting. People experiencing these symptoms should be moved to a cool, shady or air-conditioned area, and provided cool, nonalcoholic beverages.

Local residents can minimize the harmful effects of the heat by staying inside and staying hydrated by drinking lots of water. Drinking plenty of cool (not cold) fluids is the key to

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avoiding heat problems. Active people should drink two to four glasses of cool, nonalcoholic fluids each hour. Do not take salt tablets without a doctor's advice; avoid fluids that contain alcohol or caffeine. They can add to dehydration and increase the effects of heat illness.

When air conditioning is not available at home, go to a retail store, a movie or visit the public library for relief.

Residents are also reminded that they should periodically check on their neighbors - especially if they are older or have disabilities. They are of higher risk to suffer heat-related illnesses.

People are urged to plan outdoor activities for either the early morning or late evening, when the sun is less direct. Wear loose-fitting, light-colored clothing and a wide-brimmed hat to protect against sunburn. Move to the shade or into an air-conditioned building at the first signs of heat illness. Remember, heat-related symptoms can come on quickly.

Children and teens involved in team sports should be closely monitored for signs of heat stress. Coaches should consider rescheduling practice or play held during the hottest parts of the day. Young children may become preoccupied with outdoor play and not realize they are overheated. Adults should insist on frequent breaks and bring children indoors for a cool drink.

Also, don't forget about your pets. Pet owners should make sure animals, especially those outside, have plenty of water and a place to get out of the sun and cool down

Hot summer days also mean increased energy use for air conditioning and fans, putting a real strain on power supplies. This creates the potential for temporary power outages. To ease the stress of a power outage, local residents are encouraged to assemble essential supplies ahead of time, including: flashlight, portable radio, extra batteries for the flashlight and portable radio, at least one gallon of water per person per day and a small supply of food. Due to the risk of fire, candles are not recommended during a power outage. People should also keep their car fuel tank at least half full because gas stations rely on electricity to power the gas pumps.

Many people seek heat relief in pools, lakes, rivers and creeks. Dehydration and extreme sunburn are still risks, even when you are in the water. When going for a swim to beat the heat, remember the following precautions: Swim in supervised areas only. Obey all rules and posted signs. Don't mix alcohol and swimming. Alcohol impairs your judgment, balance, and coordination, affects your swimming and diving skills, and reduces your body's ability to stay warm. Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts, especially thunder and lightning storms. Stop swimming at the first indication of bad weather. Stay away from areas where you don't know the depth of the water or the current is swift, especially after heavy rainfall or during flooding.

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