



News Release



Shelby County Health Department
814 Jefferson Ave., Memphis, TN 38105

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 12, 2013

CONTACT: Elizabeth Hart
(901) 222-9607 Office
(901) 500-5227 Mobile

“IT’S GETTING HOT IN HERE!” TIPS TO BEAT THE HEAT

MEMPHIS – With the recent 90-degree temperatures, the Shelby County Health Department (SCHD) is strongly advising residents to take precautions against heat-related illnesses.

"We strongly encourage those in Shelby County to protect themselves from the adverse effects of heat," said Helen Morrow, M.D., health officer for the SCHD. "We are particularly concerned with the very young, elderly, and individuals who suffer from certain medical conditions (such as heart disease or high blood pressure) who tend to be at a greater risk."

Health officials offer the following tips to help prevent heat-related illnesses:

- **Drink plenty of cool fluid, especially water; avoid alcohol and caffeine**
- **Wear light weight, light colored clothing**
- **Limit outdoor activities during the hottest times of the day**
- **Pace yourself**
- **Stay cool indoors, especially in the heat of the day**
- **Never leave anyone in a car**
- **Monitor those at high risk**

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: the body's temperature rises rapidly, the body loses its ability to sweat, and it is unable to cool down. Body temperatures rise to 106 degrees Fahrenheit or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Stroke:

- High body temperature (above 103 degrees)
- Red, hot, dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness, nausea
- Mental confusion, shallow breathing and possible unconsciousness

Heat Exhaustion:

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. Its onset may mimic other illnesses so keep a close eye on anyone who may become ill during extreme heat.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion:

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting
- Skin may be cool and moist
- Pulse rate fast and weak
- Breathing fast and shallow

During periods of intense and prolonged heat, it is especially important to check on elderly relatives and neighbors. The elderly are more likely to have health conditions or take medications that make them more vulnerable to the heat, and their bodies do not adjust well to sudden changes in temperature. If you have elderly friends or relatives, you can help protect them from heat-related illnesses by:

- Visiting at least twice a day to watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- Taking them to air-conditioned locations if they have transportation problems.
- Encouraging them to drink plenty of fluids, especially water.
- Encouraging the use of air-conditioning if available. If fans used instead of air-conditioning, windows should be opened to provide cross ventilation. However, during periods of prolonged, excessive heat the use of fans can be much less effective than air conditioning.

For more information about heat-related illnesses, including prevention and treatment tips, visit the CDC's Extreme Heat Safety Web site at www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heattips.asp.

###