



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



As Temperatures Near 100, Health Department Urges Vermonters to Keep Cool

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BURLINGTON – When the National Weather Service forecasts temperatures “in the mid 90s to around 100” on Friday and Saturday, and a Heat Index that’s even higher, the Health Department says “cool it”!

“This is not a good time for a heavy workout, but if you want to run through a cold lawn sprinkler a few times, go right ahead.” said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD. Dr. Chen, an emergency room physician, has seen the results when people push too hard, forget to cool off or stay hydrated. “Heat stress can be life-threatening, so slow down and cool down for the next few days, and drink plenty of water.”

Take extra precautions to avoid problems during extreme heat. Air conditioning is the number one protective factor against heat-related illness. Elderly people (65 years and older), infants and children and people with chronic medical conditions are more prone to heat stress.

Cool-down tips for hot, humid weather:

- Slow down, avoid strenuous activity.
- Do not try to do too much on a hot day.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing. Light colors will reflect heat and sunlight and help maintain normal body temperature. Protect your face with a wide-brimmed hat.
- Drink plenty of water regularly and often, even if you do not feel thirsty. Regardless of your activity level, don’t wait until you’re thirsty to drink. Don’t drink liquids that contain caffeine, alcohol, or large amounts of sugar.
- Stay indoors as much as possible.
- If you do not have air conditioning, stay on your lowest floor, out of the sun. Electric fans do not cool the air, but they do help evaporate sweat, which cools your body. When the temperature is in the high 90s, fans will not prevent heat-related illness. Taking a cool shower or bath, swimming or moving to an air-conditioned place is a much better way to cool off.
- Places where you can get relief from the heat are air conditioned schools, libraries, theaters, shopping malls, and other community facilities that may offer refuge during the warmest times of the day.
- Cover windows that get morning or afternoon sun with drapes, shades, awnings or louvers. Outdoor awnings or louvers can reduce the heat that enters a home by up to 80 percent.
- Avoid too much sunshine. Sunburn slows the skin’s ability to cool itself. If you are outside, use sunscreen lotion with a high SPF (Sun Protection Factor) rating.
- Never leave children or pets alone in a closed or parked vehicle.
- Check on high-risk family, friends and neighbors. Visit adults at risk at least twice a day, such as anyone over the age 65 and over, people who have mental illness, and people with health conditions such as heart disease or high blood pressure, and closely watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Infants and young children, of course, need much more frequent watching.

For more information on heat-related illness visit: <http://www.healthvermont.gov> and click on “**Summer Safety Tips**”.

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