



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Heat Awareness & Safety 90-degree Temperatures in Vermont This Week – Stay Cool/Stay Safe

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WATERBURY – The National Weather Service in Burlington has forecast temperatures in the 90s later this week. NWS says humidity will also steadily increase this week causing some locales to feel like 100-degrees on Wednesday. These hot temperatures could lead to heat-related illnesses in extreme cases.

While extreme heat can cause problems for anyone; the elderly, children, and people with respiratory ailments are more susceptible to the heat. Those populations are encouraged to take extra precautions to avoid problems during this period of extreme temperatures.

Some advice to heed during hot weather:

- Slow down, and avoid strenuous activity. Don't 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.
- Swimming in rivers always carries with it the risk of encountering swift waters. According to the Agency of Natural Resources, following Tropical Storm Irene there may be more debris on the margins of the rivers; people should try not to swim near or around it if it's in contact with the water or attempt to climb over the debris.
- Drink plenty of water regularly and often, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Limit intake of alcoholic beverages. They can actually dehydrate your body.
- Eat well-balanced, light, regular meals.
- 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.
- Go to a place where you can get relief from the heat, such as 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 with a high SPF (Sun Protection Factor) rating.
- Never leave children or pets alone in a closed vehicle.
- Do not leave pets outside for extended periods. Make sure pets have plenty of drinking water.
- Check on family, friends, and neighbors regularly.

Tips on treating heat-related ailments:

- **Heat Cramps** are muscular pains and spasms due to heavy exertion. They usually involve the abdominal muscles or legs, and are caused by loss of water due to heavy sweating. Treatment includes getting the person to a cooler place to rest in a comfortable position. Give the person a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes.
- **Heat Exhaustion** typically occurs when people overexert themselves in a warm, humid place where body fluids are lost through heavy sweating. Blood flow to the skin increases, causing blood flow to vital organs to decrease, resulting in a form of mild shock.

The skin will be cool and moist, appearing either pale or flushed. The person may have headache and/or experience nausea. There may also be dizziness. It is important to treat the person promptly, so the condition does

not intensify into heat stroke. Get the person to a cooler place. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths, such as towels or sheets. If the person is conscious, supply a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes, making sure the person drinks slowly. Let the person rest in a comfortable position, and watch carefully for changes in his or her condition.

- **Heat Stroke** is the most serious heat emergency. It is life threatening. The person's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, shuts down. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly.

The person will have hot, red skin, with changes of consciousness. Their pulse will be rapid but weak, and they will experience rapid, shallow breathing. Body temperature can rise to 105° F. If the person was sweating from heavy work or exercise, skin may be wet; otherwise it will feel dry. A person suffering from heat stroke needs immediate assistance. Call 9-1-1 and move the person to a cooler place. Immerse in a cool bath or wrap in wet sheets. Watch for breathing problems. Keep the person lying down and continue to cool the body any way you can. If the person refuses water, is vomiting, or there are changes in their level of consciousness, do not give anything to eat or drink.

In cases of emergency or extreme illness call 9-1-1.

For more information, contact the Vermont Department of Health at 802-863-7281 or visit <http://healthvermont.gov>.

For Weather related questions call the National Weather Service at 802-862-8711 or visit www.weather.gov/btv for a complete forecast.

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