



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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State Health Officer Warns of the Dangers of Excessive Heat

SACRAMENTO – California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director and State Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith is reminding everyone to stay cool and hydrated as temperatures around the state continue to climb.

An excessive heat warning will be in effect for areas of the state through Friday morning.

“California residents need to prepare themselves for what’s looking like a very hot, dry summer,” Dr. Smith said. “July and August are generally the hottest months of the summer season and we are already seeing very high temperatures. It is important that everyone stay cool, stay hydrated, stay inside and take other precautions to prevent heat-related illness.”

Extreme heat poses a substantial health risk, especially for vulnerable populations including young children, the elderly, those with chronic diseases or disabilities, pregnant women and people who are socially isolated. Heat-related illness includes: cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and death. Warning signs of heat-related illnesses may include heavy sweating, muscle cramps, weakness, headache and nausea. Vomiting, paleness, tiredness and dizziness can also be indicators of heat-related illness.

In areas where air quality is poor, people with heart disease, asthma or other respiratory diseases should reduce or eliminate their outdoor activities. Summer schools and programs with children who have sensitive conditions, including heart disease, asthma and other respiratory diseases, should conduct activities indoors as much as possible.

Smith offers the following tips to stay safe during this period of excessive heat:

- Drink plenty of water or juice, even if you are not thirsty. Avoid alcohol.
- If you don’t have air conditioning, visit a cooling center or a public place with air conditioning (such as a shopping mall or library) to cool off for a few hours each day.
- Avoid outdoor physical exertion during the hottest parts of the day. Reduce exposure to the sun from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. when UV rays are strongest, and keep physical activities to a minimum during that time.

- Wear a wide-brimmed hat to cover the face and neck, wear loose-fitting clothing to keep cool and to protect your skin from the sun
- Regularly check on any elderly relatives or friends who live alone. Many may be on medications which increase likelihood of dehydration.
- To prevent overheating, use cool compresses, misting, showers and baths. Get medical attention if you experience a rapid, strong pulse, you feel delirious or have a body temperature above 102 degrees.
- Never leave infants, children, elderly or pets in a parked car. It can take as little as 10 minutes for the temperature inside a car to rise to levels that can kill.
- Wear sunglasses that provide 100 percent UVA and UVB protection. Chronic exposure to the sun can cause cataracts.

Liberally apply sunscreen (at least SPF 15) 15 minutes before venturing outdoors and re-apply at least every two hours – sunscreen may reduce the risk of skin cancer, the number one cancer affecting Californians.

Get more hot weather tips on [CDPH's Preventing Summer Heat Injuries Web page](#).

[Watch CDPH's video message from Dr. Smith](#) on extreme heat warning signs and tips.

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