



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 8, 2015
PH15-040

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State Health Officer Urges Californians to Stay Safe in Extreme Heat

SACRAMENTO – As temperatures begin to warm up throughout the state, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director Dr. Karen Smith advises California residents to prepare themselves for what could be a very hot, dry summer.

“Because this hot spell has come on rather suddenly, many people may be caught off guard by the warm up,” Dr. Smith Said. “It is important that all Californians take precautions to prevent heat-related illness and stay hydrated.”

In areas where air quality is impacted, people with heart disease, asthma or other respiratory diseases should minimize outdoor activities. Summer schools and programs with children who have sensitive conditions, including heart disease, asthma and other respiratory diseases should not participate in outdoor physical activity and should stay indoors as much as possible.

Extreme heat poses a substantial health risk, especially in vulnerable populations including young children, the elderly, people with chronic diseases, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and people who are socially isolated. Heat-related illnesses include cramps, heat exhaustion and, most seriously, heat stroke and death. Warning signs of heat-related illnesses vary, but may include heavy sweating, muscle cramps, weakness, headache, nausea or vomiting, paleness, tiredness or dizziness.

Smith offers the following tips to stay safe in extreme heat:

- Those lacking air conditioning should go to a cooling center, library, or public place such as a shopping mall to cool off for a few hours each day.
- Avoid physical exertion/exercise outdoors during the hottest parts of the day to avoid overheating. 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. When working outside, drink plenty of water or juice even if you are not thirsty, and take rest breaks in the shade.
- Check on elderly who live alone every 24 hours; many may be on medications which increase likelihood of dehydration.
- Those lacking air conditioning should go to a cooling center, library, or public place such as a shopping mall to cool off for a few hours each day.

- To prevent overheating, use cool compresses, misting, showers and baths. Get medical attention if you experience a rapid, strong pulse, feel delirious, or have a body temperature above 102 degrees.
- Never, EVER leave infants, children or frail elderly unattended 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 a wide-brimmed hat to cover the face and neck, and wear loose-fitting clothing to keep cool and to protect your skin from the sun and mosquitoes.
- Wear sunglasses that provide 100 percent UVA and UVB protection. Chronic exposure to the sun can cause cataracts, which left untreated, can lead to blindness.
- 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. Sunscreen may also prevent premature aging.

In California, employers with outdoor places of employment are required to prevent heat illness in their employees. For more information, please see Cal/OSHA's webpage on Heat Illness Prevention: <http://www.dir.ca.gov/DOSH/HeatIllnessInfo.html>

For more information, go to [CDPH's Preventing Summer Heat Injuries page](#).

www.cdph.ca.gov

