

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 07/8/22

www.mmdhd.org

Keep cool when temperatures soar

Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns- Many people look forward to summer's hot, steamy weather, but it's important to remember that high temperatures, especially when combined with high levels of humidity, can be dangerous. When temperatures soar to a sizzling 80 degrees or more, the body can easily become overheated, resulting in severe heat illness and even death.

People at highest risk for heat-related illness are the homeless, the elderly, the very young, pregnant women, and people with mental illness, high blood pressure, and chronic diseases. But even young, healthy people can get sick from the heat if they participate in strenuous physical activities or work outside during hot weather.

Dehydration is the first stage of heat-related illness and occurs when fluids are lost by sweating, and not replaced. Symptoms include dry mouth, thirst, headache, dizziness, cramps, and excessive fatigue.

The next stage of heat-related illness is heat exhaustion and usually occurs when people exercise or work in warm, humid conditions where excessive sweating leads to fluid loss. Symptoms include heavy sweating, flushed complexion, clammy skin, muscle cramps, elevated body temperature, headache, nausea, dizziness, confusion, weakness, and fatigue.

If dehydration or heat exhaustion is suspected, move the person to a shaded or air-conditioned area, have them drink plenty of water, apply a cold washcloth to their forehead, and consult a physician if symptoms persist or worsen.

Heat stroke, the most severe stage of heat-related illness, occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature. The body's temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. Symptoms can include vomiting; headache; chills; confusion; dizziness; red, hot, dry, or moist skin; a rapid pulse; or loss of consciousness. If heat stroke is suspected, call 9-1-1 immediately and move the person to a cool or air-conditioned area.

The most important thing you can do on hot summer days is to drink plenty of water and limit time outdoors in direct sunlight. If you must go outside, wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing and take frequent breaks. Avoid alcohol and drinks with large amounts of caffeine or sugar as they can cause you to dehydrate faster.

Be sure to check on elderly friends, family, and neighbors during a heat wave. And never leave children, the elderly, or pets in a vehicle in extreme heat, even with the windows rolled down. Temperatures inside a parked car can reach 120 degrees or more in a matter of minutes and can lead to heat stroke or death.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot, and Montcalm Counties.

###