



Genesee County Health Department

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Release Date: August 7, 2015 End Date: September 7, 2015
Contact Person: Mark Valacak, M.P.H, Health Officer
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RE: Staying safe in hot weather

August can bring high temperatures. Although summer has been mild so far, the Genesee County Health Department would like to remind residents of the health risks, and preventive measures they can take to stay safe if we experience extreme heat before the end of the summer.

Any time temperatures are in the upper 80s and above, they can cause body temperature to rise. This can result in muscle cramps, dizziness, severe heat illness and even death.

While extreme heat can put everyone at risk from heat illnesses, health risks are greatest for older adults, infants and young children, people with chronic illnesses, such as trouble breathing, mental illness or heart conditions, people who work in the heat, people who exercise in the heat and the homeless. Be sure to check frequently on loved ones, neighbors and friends who may be at greatest risk for heat illness and move them to a cool place if necessary. Also, remember to check on your pets and make sure they have adequate shade and water.

Heat illness can occur when the body is unable to cool down. The body normally cools down by sweating. During extremely hot weather, sweating may not be enough to cool the body. That's when people can become overheated to the point of becoming ill.

During very hot weather, the most important thing is to keep cool and hydrated. Follow these steps to protect yourself in hot weather:

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Better Life Through Better Health

Floyd J. McCree Courts & Human Services Building ♦ 630 S. Saginaw Street, Ste. 4 ♦ Flint, Michigan 48502-1540

Burton Branch ♦ G-3373 S. Saginaw Street ♦ Burton, Michigan 48529

Main Phone 810-257-3612 ♦ Visit us at: www.gchd.us

Step 1 - Stay cool. Use an air conditioner or go to a cool place such as a basement, neighbor's house, shopping mall or cooling center. Spending even a few hours a day in air conditioning can help reduce your risk for heat illness.

Step 2 - Use a fan only when the windows are open or the air conditioner is on. Fans will not prevent heat illness when the temperature is in the 90s.

Step 3 - Take a cool shower or bath.

Step 4 - Keep shades and curtains closed to block the sun from coming in your home or office.

Step 5 - Avoid exercising and physical activity during the hottest part of the day. Mornings and evenings are usually cooler than mid-day.

Step 6 - Stay out of the sun. If you must be in the sun, wear thin and light-colored clothing, a hat and sunglasses. Wear sunscreen (at least SPF15) and reapply every two hours, after swimming or exercising.

Step 7 - Avoid alcohol and caffeine because both can cause dehydration. Do drink plenty of other liquids.

Step 8 - Never, ever leave children, the elderly or pets in parked vehicles. Vehicles heat up very quickly and can become dangerous, even with the windows open.

For more information about heat-related illnesses see the GCHD website at www.gchd.us .