High Temperatures and Humidity Can Be Extremely Dangerous

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District and Champaign County Emergency Management Agency Urge the Public to Take Extra Precautions to Stay Safe in the Heat

Champaign, IL –The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) and the Champaign County Emergency Management Agency (CCEMA) urge everyone to watch for the symptoms of heat-related illness, and to take precautions to keep their families and communities safe.

Heat-related illness can take many forms ranging from a mild case of heat exhaustion to a more serious and life-threatening case of heat stroke. Heat-related illnesses occur when the body becomes unable to control its temperature. The body's temperature rises rapidly and the body looses its ability to perspire and cool down. Rising to temperatures of 106 degrees or higher within 10 to 15 minutes can result in death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

Signs and symptoms of heat-related illness include:

- An extremely high body temperature of 103 degrees or higher
- Red, hot, and dry skin (no signs of perspiration)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness or confusion
- Nausea

Never leave children, elderly persons, or pets in a parked car – even for a few minutes with the windows partially open. The metal of the vehicle conducts and concentrates the intense heat and brain damage or even death can occur from the rapid rise of temperature in the vehicle. Children, the elderly, and pets are especially susceptible to heat-related illness due to a variety of factors

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including, but not limited to, the inability to adjust to sudden changes in temperature, the tendency to retain more body heat, dehydration due to over activity or exertion, and the lack of access to adequate fluids.

Precautions to avoid heat-related illness:

- Stay hydrated. Drink at least 48-64 ounces of cool non-caffeinated and non-alcoholic beverages (caffeine and alcohol are diuretics and will increase dehydration). Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink.
- Reduce the amount of activity during the hottest parts of the day. If you must be active during those times, strive to take frequent breaks in a shady or cool area.
- Wear light-colored and lightweight clothes.
- Take a cool shower or sponge bath if you begin feeling over heated.
- Retreat to an air-conditioned environment if you begin to feel overly warm. If you do not have air conditioning, consider visiting a mall, grocery store, or other public place to cool off.

If you or someone you know shows signs of a heat-related illness, have someone call for medical assistance while you begin the cooling process:

- Take the person to an air-conditioned, cool, or shady area.
- Cool the person rapidly by spraying cold water from a shower or garden hose.
- Monitor the body temperature carefully until the temperature drops below 101-102 degrees.
- Give plenty of cool (not cold) non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic beverages to drink.
- Get medical assistance as soon as possible.

The following cooling centers are available throughout the local area:

- Champaign-Urbana Public Health District – Champaign
- Marketplace Mall – Champaign
- Public Aid Office, North Country Fair Drive – Champaign
- Lincoln Square Mall – Urbana
- Public Libraries – Champaign, Urbana, Tolono

CUPHD is a kid-friendly cooling center and is open from 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM, Monday – Friday. CUPHD offers a summer food program for children ages 18 and younger, educational TV, free Wi-Fi, coloring stations, and books for kids.

Anyone can suffer a heat-related illness. CUPHD and CCEMA urge everyone to take precautions in the summer heat and to check on children, the elderly, and pets frequently.

For more information, please contact CUPHD at (217) 352-7961 or visit www.c-uphd.org.

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