



NEWS RELEASE

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State Health Department Offers Hot Weather Safety Tips

BISMARCK, N.D. – Because of extremely high temperatures in parts of the state, the North Dakota Department of Health is urging everyone to take precautions to protect their health, according to Dr. Kent Martin, field medical officer with the North Dakota Department of Health.

The National Weather Service in Bismarck has issued a heat advisory in effect for most of Friday, July 2, 2010. The advisory indicates that very warm temperatures combined with high humidity will cause dangerous heat conditions that may lead to heat-related illness.

“Extremely high temperatures such as we are experiencing can be dangerous,” Martin said. “Anyone can suffer from heat-related illness, but some people are at higher risk, especially infants and children to age 4, people 65 and older, people who are overweight and those who have health conditions such as heart disease or high blood pressure or who take medications for depression, insomnia or poor circulation. In addition, those who exert themselves during work or exercise need to make sure they don’t become dehydrated.”

Dr. Martin recommends the following hot weather safety tips:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
 - During hot weather, drink more fluids than you normally do, regardless of your activity level. Don’t wait until you are thirsty to drink. Drink two to four glasses of cool fluids each hour if you’re doing heavy exercise in a hot environment.
 - Avoid liquids that contain alcohol or large amounts of sugar, as they can cause you to lose more body fluid. The best fluid to drink is water.
- Protect yourself.
 - People at high risk for heat-related illness should stay indoors in an air-conditioned place. If you don’t have air conditioning, go to the shopping mall or public library – even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat. Electric fans will not prevent heat-related illness when temperatures are in the 90s or higher.

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- If you are outside, rest often in the shade to give your body a chance to cool down.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses to protect yourself from the sun. Apply a sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher 30 minutes before going outside, and reapply while outside according to package directions.

Heat stroke is a serious, life-threatening illness that occurs when the body is unable to regulate its temperature. In heat stroke, the body's temperature rises rapidly, and the body stops sweating and cannot cool down. Warning signs vary but can include:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103 degrees F, orally).
- Red, hot and dry skin (no sweating).
- Rapid, strong pulse.
- Throbbing headache.
- Dizziness.
- Nausea.
- Confusion.
- Unconsciousness.

If you see any of these signs, immediately call for medical assistance and begin cooling the victim rapidly, using whatever methods you can (sponging with cool water, placing in a cool shower or a tub of cool water, or spraying with a garden hose).

For more information, contact Dr. Kent Martin, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2372.

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