



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
July 19, 2011

For More Information, Contact:
Dawn Mayer
Division of Injury Prevention and Control
North Dakota Department of Health
Phone: 701.328.4533
E-mail: drmayer@nd.gov

State Health Department Offers Hot Weather Safety Tips

BISMARCK, N.D. – Because of extremely high temperatures across North Dakota, the state health department is urging everyone to take precautions to protect their health, according to Dawn Mayer with the department’s Division of Injury Prevention and Control.

“Extremely high temperatures such as we are experiencing can be dangerous,” Mayer 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.”

The Department of Health recommends the following hot weather safety tips:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
 - During hot weather, drink more fluids, 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 and others.
 - 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.
 - If you are outside, rest often in the shade to give your body a chance to cool down.

– more –

- 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.
- DO NOT leave children or pets in parked vehicles. Vehicles can heat up to dangerous temperatures very quickly. Even with the windows cracked open, interior temperatures can rise almost 20 degrees Fahrenheit within the first 10 minutes. Anyone left inside is at risk for serious heat-related illnesses or even death. To remind yourself that a child is in the car, keep a stuffed animal in the car seat. When the child is buckled in, place the stuffed animal in the front with the driver. When leaving your car, check to make sure everyone is out of the car. Do not overlook any children who may have fallen asleep. Lock parked vehicles to keep children from entering them without anyone knowing.

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 Dawn Mayer, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4533.

– 30 –

Please note: To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at www.nddohpressroom.gov.