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PRESS RELEASE

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Over heated?

We welcome the bright sunny and warm temperatures. However, with this early summer heat wave, it is important to remember that summertime heat can be dangerous for anyone. Some people are at risk of serious health effects, even death from being overheated. Using preventive measures and knowing the signs and symptoms of heat related illness can help lessen the occurrence of these illnesses.

Older adults, young children and people who are overweight or obese are at increased risk for heat illness. People with chronic medical conditions such as heart disease and respiratory problems, including asthma and emphysema also need to take precautions during hot and humid weather.

Certain medications can also cause sensitivity to the sun and or interfere with the body's ability to sweat and stay cool in hot humid conditions. Some medications that may affect the body's cooling system are antihistamines, antidepressants, beta blockers, anti-diarrhea pills, and some over the counter medications. It is wise to check with your pharmacist and read medicine labels to learn if the medications you take can cause sun and heat sensitivity.

The most common heat-related illnesses are heat exhaustion, heat stroke (sun stroke), heat cramps and heat rash. It is important to recognize that people in the high risk group may experience heat-induced illnesses during warm temperatures as well as during a heat wave.

Heat Exhaustion is characterized by heavy sweating, dizziness, headache, weakness, and cold clammy skin with possible nausea and vomiting. Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke, so immediate action is necessary to move the person to a cool place, loosen clothing and apply cool, wet clothes to the face neck and arms. The person should sip cool water slowly and rest. If an air conditioned place is not available it is best to place the person in a shaded area.

Heat Stroke, sometimes referred to as sun stroke, is an emergency situation and 911 should be called immediately. This is characterized by hot, dry red skin, a rapid pulse, loss of alertness, confusion, fainting and rapid shallow breathing. Before help arrives, the person should be moved to an air conditioned or shaded area with ice packs placed on the neck, wrists, ankles and armpits. Clothing should be loosened or removed. If ice is not available cool water or cool cloths can be used.

Heat cramps are muscle cramps in the extremities or abdominal area. They can occur along with heavy sweating and possibly mild nausea. The person should be moved to a cool or air

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conditioned area, drink cool water and rest. Stretching or massaging the affected area may also help.

Heat rash is a skin irritation that may look like a red cluster of pimples or small blisters. Once again, moving the person to a cool place is essential. Keep the affected area dry and check with a health care professional if the rash persists.

Using air conditioning during periods of hot humid weather can prevent some of these heat related illnesses. If air conditioning is not available, using fans in the home and closing blinds on the sunny side of the house can help. Drinking more water and fewer beverages with caffeine and alcohol also is recommended. Take cool showers and avoid strenuous activity during peak sun hours of 10:00 AM- 4:00 PM and wear loose lightweight clothing. Remember to always wear sun screen when outdoors.

It is also important to remember our pets. Pets should never be left in a parked car, as the temperature in a parked car rises rapidly and is dangerous to their health. Having water available at all times and a shady area for outside pets is essential.