

August 23, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Office of Communications 614-644-8562

ODH Director Encourages Precautions In Extreme Heat

COLUMBUS – The National Weather Service has issued excessive heat warnings and heat advisories for Ohio for Thursday and into Friday, and Ohio Department of Health Director Bruce Vanderhoff, MD, MBA, is asking Ohioans to take precautions and recognize the signs of heat-related illnesses.

According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), every year, an average of more than 600 people die nationwide from heat-related causes.

“The heat indexes expected in Ohio can truly be dangerous, and I encourage you to take these precautions seriously,” Dr. Vanderhoff said. “In particular, please remember to look out for those who are more vulnerable, such as young children and the elderly.”

Here are tips to follow during periods of high temperatures and high humidity:

Drink Cool Fluids

- Help your body sweat and cool down by staying well hydrated with water. Don’t wait until you are thirsty to start drinking water.
- Adults should drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water each day. Monitor your body – you may need to drink more on hot and humid days.
- Avoid fluids that contain alcohol or caffeine, because they can add to dehydration and increase the effects of heat illness.

Monitor or Limit Outdoor Activities

- Plan outdoor activities for the early morning or evening when the sun is less direct.
- Wear loose-fitting, light-colored clothing.
- A wide-brimmed hat protects against sunburn and helps keep the body cooler.
- Move to the shade or into an air-conditioned building at the first signs of heat illness.
- Very young children may become preoccupied with outdoor play and not realize that they are getting overheated. Adults should require frequent breaks and bring them indoors for a cool drink.
- Children or youth involved in team sports should be closely monitored for signs of heat stress. Consideration should be given to shifting practices and games to cooler times of the day.

It is also very important to know the signs of heat stroke and heat exhaustion.

- **Heat exhaustion** is characterized by heavy sweating; cold, pale, and clammy skin; fast, weak pulse; muscle cramps; tiredness or weakness; a headache; and nausea.
- Move the exhausted individual to a cool place, loosen their clothing, and have them sip water. If possible, put cool, wet clothes on the person or take a cool bath.
- If the exhausted individual begins throwing up, or if symptoms get worse or last for over an hour – call 911.

- **Heat stroke** is a potentially life-threatening condition, characterized by a body temperature of 103 degrees or higher; red, hot and dry skin with no sweating; rapid pulse; headache; dizziness; nausea; confusion; unconsciousness; and gray skin color.
- People experiencing heat stroke need immediate medical assistance – call 911.
- Before help arrives, begin cooling the exhausted individual by any means possible, such as spray from a garden hose or by placing the person in a cool tub of water.

For more information on heat-related illnesses, visit the [Centers for Disease Control Prevention's website here.](#)

###

About the Ohio Department of Health

The Ohio Department of Health's mission is advancing the health and well-being of all Ohioans by transforming the state's public health system through unique partnerships and funding streams; addressing the community conditions and inequities that lead to disparities in health outcomes; and implementing data-driven, evidence-based solutions.