



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Department of Emergency Preparedness

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News Release

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County Says Take Action Now to Prevent Heat Related Illness

FREDERICK, MD – The weather forecast calls for high temperatures across the region through the weekend. More than 600 people in the United States are killed by extreme heat every year according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Heat-related deaths and illnesses are preventable. The Frederick County Department of Emergency Preparedness and the Frederick County Health Department want you to take action now and make a plan to stay safe in the heat.

Very hot weather can make people sick, even healthy adults. Older adults, those who are pregnant, infants and young children, people experiencing homelessness, and people with pre-existing health conditions are at higher risk for heat-related illness. If you think someone is having a medical emergency, call 911.

- **NEVER leave children or people unattended in vehicles under any circumstances.** Car interiors can quickly reach lethal temperatures even when it feels cool outside. In 2007, an infant from Virginia died of heatstroke after being left in a car on a 66°F day.
- **Stay hydrated.** Drink more fluids (except alcohol) and don't wait until you are thirsty to drink. High temperatures cause more loss of body fluids through sweat. Alcohol can increase fluid loss due to increased urination and quickly lead to dehydration.
- **Keep an eye on older relatives and neighbors and those aged 4 and younger.** People aged 65 years or older are less likely to sense and respond to changes in temperature or feel thirsty until already dehydrated. Very young children are also sensitive to the effects of extreme heat and rely on their caregivers to make sure that they stay cool and hydrated. It is important for family, friends or neighbors to check in and make sure that they are staying cool and hydrated.
- **Talk with your healthcare provider.** Some chronic conditions and medications may make you more susceptible to heat. For example, people with diabetes get dehydrated more quickly and some medicines commonly used to treat high blood pressure can worsen dehydration. Talk to your healthcare provider about staying safe in high temperatures.

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- **Find someplace cooler during the hottest daytime hours.**

Limit outdoor activity to morning and evening hours as much as possible. If your home does not have air conditioning, consider visiting friends or family who do. Alternately, visit a public air-conditioned space such as a public library, mall, movie theater, or museum. Keep in mind electric fans alone will not prevent heat-related illness when the temperature is in the high 90s.

- **Don't forget about your pets!**

Pets can suffer from heat-related illness too. Make sure your pet has a ventilated, cool place to lay and plenty of water. If you have air conditioning, keep them inside with you. Do not leave your pet outside for extended periods of time. When outside, ensure there is plenty of shade and cool water. Dog and cat paws have footpads which can burn on hot surfaces like concrete, metal, pavement, sidewalks and asphalt. Walk them in shaded areas and pay attention to any signs of discomfort.

For more information on preparing for extreme heat and other emergencies, visit www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/READY and <https://Health.FrederickCountyMD.gov/Weather>. Additionally, the Department of Emergency Preparedness can be contacted at 301-600-1746 or EM@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

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