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<http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org>

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Washtenaw County Public Health Offers Space to Cool Off** *Heat Advisory Issued Tuesday afternoon through Wednesday*

YPSILANTI, MI., July 16, 2013 – Washtenaw County Public Health is monitoring the heat and offering space for residents to cool off during business hours. No formal emergency response is activated at this time. As a precaution, however, residents are welcome to cool off at the County Human Services building, located at 555 Towner in Ypsilanti. Bottled drinking water will be provided in the atrium area starting Wednesday morning. Regular building hours are 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. Other area entities willing to let residents cool off during their normal business hours is available at <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org>.

Health officials encourage all residents to take steps to avoid heat-related illness, especially when temperatures remain high for several days. Stay hydrated, cool off whenever possible and know the warning signs of severe heat-related illness. Seek immediate medical attention by calling 911 if heat-related illness is suspected.

“Some residents may be more vulnerable to the heat,” says Cindra James, Emergency Preparedness Administrator for Public Health. “Cooling off – even briefly – may help prevent heat-related illness,” she continued. Older persons, infants, children and persons with underlying health conditions or who take certain medications may be more sensitive to the hot conditions. Outdoor work or physical activity may increase the risk of illness.

#### **Local Response Plan**

The Washtenaw County Heatwave Community Response Plan has not been activated at this time. An emergency response is typically only activated if a heat advisory remains in effect for multiple days or if an excessive heat warning is issued by the National Weather Service. A widespread loss of power or other complications may also activate the local Heatwave Response Plan. If it becomes activated, designated public cooling centers will open for extended hours and

emergency transportation will be available. Public Health is conducting surveillance of heat-related illnesses and will issue public information through the media, as needed. For official updates, visit <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org>, call 211 or listen to WEMU 89.1 FM.

## **Prevent Heat-Related Illness**

Heat illness can occur when the body is unable to cool down. The body normally cools down by sweating. During extremely hot weather, sweating may not be enough to cool the body.

- Use an air conditioner or go to a cooler place. Spending a few hours a day in air conditioning can reduce your risk for heat-related illness.
- Drink extra water to stay hydrated. Avoid beverages that contain caffeine or alcohol.
- Take a cool shower or bath.
- Avoid outdoor exercise and physical activity during the hottest part of the day. Or, reduce or eliminate any outdoor activities during a heat wave.
- Stay out of the sun. If you must be in the sun, wear thin and light-colored clothing, a hat and sunglasses. Wear sunscreen and reapply every two hours.
- Check on family, neighbors and friends. Help them get to a cool place if necessary.
- Never leave children, older adults or pets in parked vehicles. Vehicles heat up very quickly and can become dangerous, even with the windows open.

The most serious heat-related illness is **heat stroke**. It occurs when the body cannot regulate its temperature. A person's body temperature may rise to 106°F or higher in 10 to 15 minutes. The person will be unable to sweat or cool down. Warning signs may include:

- **body temperature of 103°F or higher**
- **red, hot and dry skin (no sweating)**
- **rapid, strong pulse**
- **throbbing headache**
- **dizziness**
- **nausea, confusion or unconsciousness**

Call 911 for immediate medical assistance if heat stroke is suspected. Cool the victim, if possible. If the victim's muscles are twitching uncontrollably, do not give him or her liquids.

Other, less-serious heat-related illnesses include:

- Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can progress into heat stroke. Heat exhaustion may require medical attention.
- Heat cramps are muscle pains or spasms that may occur with strenuous activities.
- Heat rash is a skin irritation caused by excessive sweating during hot, humid weather.

For more information on heat-related illness, visit [www.ewashtenaw.org/heat](http://www.ewashtenaw.org/heat).

Washtenaw County Public Health promotes health and prevents disease and injury in our community. The Public Health Emergency Preparedness program maintains local response plans; coordinates with community partners; and provides official information and training. Visit Public Health online at <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org> or call 734-544-6700.

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