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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STAY SAFE IN HOT WEATHER

Learn How to Stay Cool When the Weather is Hot

YPSILANTI, Mich., June 26, 2007—In case you haven't noticed, it's hot out there. *Really* hot. And while you may have thought summer arrived sometime during early May, with temperatures routinely reaching the upper 80s and low 90s, summer is now officially here. Which means it's going to get even *hotter*. Even more reason to brush up on hot weather safety tips, according to officials at the Washtenaw County Public Health Department.

“Those most at risk for heat-related illnesses include people ages 65 and older, infants and young children, people who are overweight, people who are ill or on certain medications, and people who are doing physical activities,” said Cindra James, Public Health Preparedness Coordinator for the Washtenaw County Public Health Department. “The easiest things to do to avoid heat exhaustion and heat stroke are some of the simplest. Stay hydrated by drinking lots of non-alcoholic and non-caffeinated beverages, go somewhere with air conditioning, or take a cool shower or bath,” she said. “And don't forget to check-in with family, friends, and neighbors to monitor their well-being. If you recognize the symptoms of heat exhaustion or heat stroke, don't hesitate to call 911.”

People suffer heat-related illnesses when their bodies cannot cool themselves normally. If you are exercising or playing sports when it's hot outside, you need to be extra careful. And don't forget your animals, who also need special care and attention during times of extreme heat. Heat-related illnesses take the form of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Here's how to recognize both.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is a mild heat-related illness that can occur over several days of being in high temperatures and not drinking enough fluids. If not treated, it may lead to heat stroke.

The warning signs of heat exhaustion include:

- Heavy sweating
- Fast, shallow breathing
- Fast, weak pulse
- Paleness

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- Muscle cramps
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Fainting

If you suspect **heat exhaustion**, do the following:

- Call 911 if the symptoms are severe or the victim has heart problems or high blood pressure
- Rest
- Cool the victim (e.g., cool shower, bath, or sponge bath)
- Drink cool beverages

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness, one that occurs when the body cannot control its temperature. Heat stroke victims lose their ability to sweat and cannot cool down. This condition can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

The warning signs of heat stroke include:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103°F)
- Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Fast, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Nausea
- Unconsciousness

If you suspect **heat stroke**, do the following:

- Call 911
- Get the victim to a shady area
- Cool the victim fast (e.g., cool shower or bath)
- Do not give the victim fluids to drink

Medications

Some medications make it harder for the body to control its temperature, putting people taking these medications at higher risk for heat-related illnesses. Medications that increase the risk of heat-related illness include:

- Antidepressant drugs
- Anti-Parkinson drugs
- Psychiatric drugs
- Some antihistamines (e.g., Benadryl and Chlortripolon)
- Over-the-counter sleeping medications (e.g., Nytol)
- Anti-diarrhea pills (e.g., Lomotil)

For more information about issues that affect the public's health, or the Washtenaw County Public Health Department, please visit <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org> or call (734) 544-6700.

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