

## The Heat is on

Extreme heat brings with it the possibility of heat-induced illnesses. Anyone who works hard outdoors and does not replenish body fluids is highly susceptible to heat related illnesses, such as heat stroke and heat exhaustion. People at high risk for heat-related illness include: those 65 years of age or older, those with high blood pressure, those working or exercising in a hot environment, infants and children up to 4 years of age, those overweight, and people who are ill or on certain medications.

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. This occurs when the body temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down causing the body temperature to rise to 106 degrees F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided. Some warning signs of heat stroke include: body temperature above 103 degrees F, rapid pulse, dizziness, nausea, confusion, unconsciousness, and lack of sweating.

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. Some warning signs of heat exhaustion include: heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, and fainting.

There are several preventative actions you can take to beat the heat:

- Never leave children or pets in an unattended vehicle, even for a few minutes.
- Drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids and eat well-balanced, low calorie, regular meals.
- Stay out of the sun, and in an air conditioned place, especially during the warmest part of the day.
- Slow down. Restrict strenuous activities to the cooler time of day.
- Dress in loose, lightweight, light colored clothes.
- Use sunscreen to avoid sun burn and consider wearing a hat.
- During prolonged heat episodes, check on elderly family, friends and neighbors who do not have air conditioning and who spend much of their time alone.

By following these simple tips you can better prepare for the summer heat and protect your health as temperatures soar. Just remember to keep cool and use common sense, so you can safely enjoy the rest of your summer.

