Residents reminded to stay safe as summer temperatures remain high

LANSING, Mich. – With temperatures across the state expected to remain in the 80s and above through next week, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is reminding all residents to stay cool to beat the heat.

MDHHS routinely reviews emergency department (ED) data for heat-related illness. During this past July 4 weekend, July 2 to July 5, 120 ED visits due to complaints that include heat exhaustion and heatstroke, sunburn and sun poisoning were reported. Daily temperatures this week are anticipated to again rise above 80 degrees, which generally correlates with an increase in ED visits for heat-related illness.

“It’s important Michiganders stay hydrated and out of the sun as much possible to avoid serious health complications during this hot weather,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, MDHHS chief medical executive and chief deputy director for health. “Young children, older adults and those who are have medical conditions are at increased risk for heat-related illness, so be sure to check frequently on them and others in your community who may need additional assistance.”

To prevent complications from the heat, residents are encouraged to:
- Drink more fluids and avoid liquids with large amounts of sugar or alcohol.
- Limit outdoor activities to when it is coolest in the morning and evening.
- Spend time indoors in air conditioning.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored and loose-fitting clothing.
- Wear sunscreen, as sunburn affects a body’s ability to cool down.
- Check on elderly neighbors and relatives to determine if they need assistance.

For those without access to air conditioning, text or call Michigan 211 or contact your local health department to find out if there is a cooling center nearby. You can also spend some time at an air-conditioned store, shopping mall or other public building – even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help. Remember to follow guidance regarding COVID-19 precautions including wearing a mask or other face covering and practicing social distancing (keeping a distance of at least 6 feet from others).

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In addition to staying hydrated and out of the sun, residents are reminded to never leave children or pets alone in a car even with the windows cracked. Temperatures inside a car can easily be double the temperature outside, and because a child’s body heats up three to five times faster than an adult’s they are more susceptible to heatstroke.

Heat exhaustion and heatstroke are both forms of heat-related illness. Signs of heat-related illness vary but may include heavy sweating, muscle cramps, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea or vomiting, fainting, an extremely high body temperature (above 103°F) and tiredness. Heatstroke occurs when the body is unable to regulate its temperature and can result in death if not treated promptly.

The heat can also combine with air pollutants to cause high ozone levels, triggering Air Quality Alerts. People who have asthma or other breathing problems should avoid outdoor activities if an Air Quality Alert is triggered in their area.

For more information about how to protect yourself and your loved ones from heat-related illness, see the MDHHS Heat Awareness and Safety Fact Sheet, or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s website.

To learn more about Air Quality Alerts, visit AirNow.gov.

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