

DHHS Urges Caution During Extreme Heat

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RALEIGH – The hottest temperatures of the summer are forecast to hit parts of North Carolina over the next three days, pushing thermometers to the vicinity of triple digits and stressing people and pets. Temperatures in much of the state are expected to reach the upper 90s with heat indexes topping 100 degrees Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Emergency department visits for heat-related illness statewide hit 373 during the week of July 9-15, according to the [North Carolina Heat Report](#). Seventy-seven percent of illness was among males, mostly ages 25-44. Most who were treated referenced working outdoors on landscaping and roofing projects, outdoor recreation such as gardening, hiking or attending outdoor events, alcohol use and diabetes.

“As the temperatures soar to the high 90s this weekend in North Carolina, we strongly urge everyone to take precautions for themselves and loved ones and stay in cool or air-conditioned spaces as much as possible, said Acting State Health Director Kelly Kimple, MD, MPH. “For those who must work outside, we encourage staying hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids frequently to minimize the risk of heat-related illness.”

Symptoms of heat-related stress and illness include muscle cramps, fatigue, weakness, dizziness, fainting, headaches, nausea and vomiting. If you have these symptoms, seek medical care. Children, older adults, outdoor workers, people with chronic health conditions or those on heat-sensitive medications are most vulnerable to illness during the hot summer months.

To reduce risk of heat-related illness:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- If spending multiple hours outside, take breaks in cool or air-conditioned environments.
- Speak with your physician about how to stay safe if you take medicines that make you more vulnerable to heat, such as drugs for high blood pressure, migraines, allergies, muscle spasms, mental illness and tranquilizers.
- Reduce time spent outside during the hottest part of the day, usually 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Never leave children or pets unattended in vehicles, especially during warm or hot weather as temperature levels inside a car can reach a lethal level in a matter of minutes.

For more information on how to prevent heat-related health issues and to learn about heat-related illness in North Carolina, visit: publichealth.nc.gov/chronicdiseaseandinjury/heat.htm