

Heat Awareness Day: How to Stay Safe in Extreme Heat

Heat is the number one weather-related killer in the United States, resulting in hundreds of fatalities each year, and claiming more lives than floods, lightning, tornadoes and hurricanes combined. **National Heat Awareness Day** is Friday May 23rd 2014, and the Cuyahoga County Office of Emergency Management has some suggestions to help you and your family stay safe this summer.

When temperatures rise:

Drink plenty of cool, non-alcoholic beverages, especially those that do not contain sugar or caffeine. Do not wait until you're thirsty to drink more fluids, and drink two to four cups of water every hour while working or exercising outside.

Spend as little time as possible in the sun and keep your activity level to a minimum. Make sure to wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing, and do not forget sunscreen.

Keep your living space cool. Air-conditioning is the number one protective factor against heat-related illness and death. Use air conditioning whenever possible, and cover windows to keep the sun from shining in. Do not rely on fans, because when temperatures rise above 95 degrees, fans can actually

heat a room by circulating the hot air. Taking a cool shower or bath and applying cold wet rags to the neck, head, and limbs will also cool you down.

Never leave children, elderly and disabled persons, or pets in a parked car – even briefly. Temperatures in a car can become life threatening within minutes. Even with the windows partially open, the temperature inside a car can rise 20 to 30 degrees above the outside temperature in 10 to 20 minutes.

Know the signs of Heat Stroke. Heat stroke is life-threatening and requires medical attention immediately. It is often accompanied by dry skin, a body temperature above 103 degrees Fahrenheit, rapid pulse, confusion and sometimes unconsciousness. It can strike even if you have no previous signs of heat injury. Major organ damage, brain damage, and even death can occur. If heat stroke is suspected, call 911 immediately.

Elderly people (50 years and older), infants and children, and people with chronic medical conditions are more prone to heat stress. However, anyone can experience a heat-related illness when overexposed to heat or having over-exercised.

For more information on heat emergencies or other natural and man-made hazards, contact the Cuyahoga County Office of Emergency Management at 216-443-5700,

ema@cuyahogacounty.us, or visit our website at:
www.cuyahogacounty.us

