

Press Release

June 16, 2006

Heat Awareness in Wisconsin

In 1995, two major killer heat waves affected most of Wisconsin resulting in 150 heat-related deaths and over 300 heat-related illnesses. Summer heat waves have been the biggest weather-related killers in Wisconsin for the past 50 years, far exceeding tornadoes and severe storms.

To encourage citizens be prepared for severe heat, these tips are offered to keep safe in hot weather:

Never leave children, disabled persons, or pets in a car- even briefly.

Temperatures in a car can become life threatening within minutes.

Keep your living space cool. Cover windows to keep the sun from shining in. If you don't have an air conditioner, open windows to let air circulate. When it's hotter than 95 degrees, use fans to blow hot air out of the window, rather than to blow hot air on to your body. Basements or ground floors are often cooler than upper floors.

Slow down and limit physical activity. Plan outings or exertion for the early morning or after dark, when temperatures are cooler.

Drink plenty of water and eat lightly. Don't wait for thirst, but instead drink plenty of water throughout the day. Avoid alcohol or caffeine and stay away from hot, heavy meals.

Infants should drink breast milk or formula to get the right balance of water, salts, and energy. You may also supplement your infant's fluids with an additional 4 to 8 ounces of water per day, but do not dilute the formula unless instructed to do so by your doctor.

Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light colored clothing. Add a hat or umbrella to keep your head cool...and do not forget sunscreen!

Do not stop taking medication unless you doctor says you should. Take extra care to stay cool, and ask you doctor or pharmacist for any special heat advice.

People at higher risk of a heat-related illness include:

- Older adults
- Infants and young children
- People with chronic heart and lung problems
- People with disabilities
- Overweight persons
- Those who work outdoors or in hot settings
- Users of some medications, especially those taken for mental disorders, movement disorder, allergies, depression, and heart or circulatory problems
- People that are isolated who don't know when or how to cool off – or when to call for help

For additional information about heat awareness, contact the Waushara County Public Health Department at 920-787-6535 or Waushara County Sheriff's Department, Office of Emergency Management at 920-787-6571.