

HEAT AWARENESS

In 1995, two major killer heat waves affected most of Wisconsin resulting in 154 heat-related deaths and over 30 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 to be prepared for severe heat, Wisconsin Emergency Management, Waushara County Sheriff's Department's Office of Emergency Management and Waushara County Public Health offers these tips to keep safe in hot weather:

- 1. Never leave children, disabled persons, or pets in a parked car – even briefly.** *Temperatures in a car can become life threatening within minutes.*
- 2. 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 out the 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.*
- 3. Slow down and limit physical activity.** *Plan outings or exertion for the early morning or after dark, when temperatures are cooler.*
- 4. 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.*
- 5. Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light colored clothing.** *Add a hat or umbrella to keep your head cool...and don't forget sunscreen.*
- 6. Don't stop taking medication unless your doctor says you should.** *Take extra care to stay cool, and ask your doctor or pharmacist for any special heat advice.*

Easy ways to cool off include a cool, but not cold bath or shower which actually works faster than an air conditioner. Applying cold wet rags to the neck, head and limbs also cools down the body quickly.

People at risk of a heat related illness include:

- Older adults
- Infants and young children
- People with chronic heart or lung problems
- 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 Waushara County Public Health Department at 920-787-6590 or Waushara Emergency Management at 920-787-5471.