



News

Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders
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For Immediate Release

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Burlco Health Department Issues Heat-Related Illness Prevention Tips

The Burlington County Health Department is asking residents to take precautions to avoid heat-related illness during the very high temperatures this weekend.

“Although anyone is susceptible to a heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others,” said Burlington County Freeholder Director Joe Donnelly.

Infants and young children, persons over age 65, people with mental disabilities and those who are physically ill are most at risk for suffering a heat-related illness. It is recommended that these individuals be visited at least twice a day and watched for any symptoms of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

Residents who may live in homes where there is no air conditioning are to be advised to go to public facilities in the county such as malls, libraries, etc., that are open for business during peak heat hours.

“Heat stroke and heat exhaustion are preventable. The first step is to drink plenty of fluids,” said Donnelly.

Dehydration will often occur on days when there are high temperatures and can progress into more serious heat-related illness, which is why drinking fluids is so vital.

Additional tips to prevent dehydration and other heat-related illnesses include:

- Avoid caffeinated beverages and alcohol – these fluids dehydrate the body rather than hydrate like water and sports drinks
- Avoid carbonated beverages, which can cause bloating and keep people from drinking enough fluid to rehydrate
- Wear light colored, absorbent, loose fitting clothing
- Stay in cool, shady areas when possible, protect your skin with sun block
- Limit your exercise. If you must exercise drink 2 to 4 glasses of nonalcoholic fluids each hour

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Heat exhaustion and heat stroke occur when bodies are unable to properly cool themselves. Heat stroke is an extreme rise in body temperature and the body cannot rid itself of the excess heat. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not sought. Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat stroke that can occur from long exposures to high temperatures.

Each year more people die from extreme heat than from hurricanes, lightning, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes combined. On average approximately 300 people die each year from extreme heat. Typically, in New Jersey fewer than five people die annually.

For more information on heat-related illnesses, prevention tips and first aid recommendations please go to:

- Burlington County Health Department website – www.co.burlington.nj.us.
- New Jersey Department of Health - www.state.nj.us/health
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – www.cdc.gov

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