News Release

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Recommended Precautions for Extreme Heat

Plattsburgh, August 9, 2021. The Clinton County Health Department (CCHD) is urging residents to prepare for the extreme heat forecasted by staying cool, hydrated and informed. High temperatures and heat indexes can pose serious health risks, especially for certain populations. Take precautions and learn the signs and symptoms of heat related illnesses.

“The extreme temperatures anticipated in the upcoming days are concerning because they can lead to very high body temperatures, resulting in heat-related illnesses and even death,” stated Mark Lafountain, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator at CCHD. “Fortunately, heat-related illnesses and deaths are preventable. If you keep yourself informed and follow a few simple steps to stay cool and hydrated, you and your family can stay healthy this summer.”

CCHD recommends following these tips to protect yourself and your family when temperatures soar:

- Never leave children or pets inside a parked car, even briefly. In direct sunlight, car interiors can reach temperatures as high as 120 to 140 degrees (even on a mild 70-degree day) and can rise at a rate of greater than one degree/minute. LOOK before you LOCK.
- Stay in air-conditioned areas as much as possible. If your home does not have air conditioning, go to the shopping mall or public library—even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat.
- Drink plenty of fluids before you are thirsty, regardless of how active you are. Avoid alcohol, caffeine and sugary drinks as they will cause you to lose more body fluid. As you sweat you will need to replenish the fluids your body has lost.
- Stay out of the sun as much as possible. People and pets should limit outdoor activities to the times of the day that are typically cooler (i.e. early morning or evening). Rest often in shady areas.
- Choose lightweight, light-colored and loose-fitting clothing to help keep cool.
- Apply a broad spectrum sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher before heading outside. Sunburns can affect the body’s ability to cool itself down.
- Check on your neighbors, friends and family members, especially the elderly and those without air conditioning.

“Heat safety is important for everyone, but certain groups should be extra cautious,” added Mr. Lafountain. “Older adults (65+), infants and children, those with chronic medical conditions, those in low income areas, athletes, and those who work outdoors tend to be at an increased risk for developing heat illnesses.”
Heat illnesses include: heat rash, sunburn, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. The most serious heat illness is heat stroke.

Signs and symptoms of heat stroke include:
- High body temperature (103°F or higher)
- Hot, red, dry, or damp skin
- Fast, strong pulse
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Losing consciousness (passing out)

“Heat stroke is a medical emergency,” explained Mr. Lafountain. “If you feel someone may be suffering from heat stroke, get the person into shade or an air conditioned area and call 911 right away.”

For more information about the signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses and keeping cool in the summer heat, visit www.cdc.gov/extremeheat. Updates on weather conditions are available from the National Weather Service at www.weather.gov/safety/heat.

About the Clinton County Health Department:

The Health Department is an accredited full service department serving the residents of Clinton County. The Health Department’s Mission is to improve and protect the health, well-being and environment of the people of Clinton County. Visit our website at www.clintonhealth.org or connect with us on Facebook (@clintonhealth), Twitter (@ClintonCountyHD), and Instagram (clintoncountyhealth).

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