The summer and sometimes spring months can be uncomfortable and potentially life threatening if you become overexposed to heat. Alameda County Public Health Department encourages residents to be aware of health risks during warm weather days. If you have very young, elderly or other vulnerable people living with or near you, following these guidelines could make a big difference.

**PREPARING FOR A HEAT WAVE**

- Store at least one gallon of water per person, per day.
- Check with your doctor if you are on a fluid-restricted diet.
- Keep easy-to-prepare, nonperishable foods available (packaged snacks, fruits, water and juices).
- Set up a “BUDDY” system where family, friends or others can check on each other via phone or visits.
- Keep essential medicines and prescription information and a small first aid kit available.
- Know the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of your doctors and pharmacists.

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**SEEKING RELIEF FROM THE HEAT**

The following buildings may provide air-conditioned refuge during the warmest part of the day.

- Libraries
- Senior centers
- Community centers
- Movie theaters
- Shopping malls
- Places of worship
- Grocery stores

**HEAT WAVE Are you Prepared?**

**Please call 9-1-1 for any serious heat-related medical condition!**

For more information or advice on heat emergencies contact:

**Alameda County Public Health Dept.**
1000 Broadway, Suite 500
Oakland, CA 94607
(510) 267-8000
www.acphd.org

**Alameda County EMS**
1000 San Leandro Blvd.
San Leandro, CA 94577
(510) 618-2050
www.acphd.org/ems

Revised August 2012
**Recognizing and Treating Heat Illness**

The heat of summer is nothing new to humans. We have developed an amazing ability to deal with warm temperatures. The normal human response to heat is to sweat and increase the blood flow to our skin. Air moving over our moist skin (a breeze, for example) allows our bodies to cool, which is critical in maintaining a normal body temperature. We can help our bodies to adapt to heat if we drink more water, cut down on physical activities, and seek out cool locations. It is also important to eat regularly so that our bodies will get essential calories and electrolytes (important salts needed to maintain normal body function).

Heat Illness can affect anyone. However, the very young, elderly, physically impaired, obese, and those taking certain medicines are at even higher risk. Some medications (diuretics, anti-depressants and blood pressure medicine) can alter the body’s normal response to heat. Consult with your doctor on this very important issue. Do not change your medication schedule without your physician’s advice.

The following chart is a summary of the more common heat illnesses. Please do not hesitate to call 9-1-1 if any heat related problem seems serious. **Heat stroke kills!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>CAUSE</th>
<th>SIGNS &amp; SYMPTOMS</th>
<th>TREATMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heat Cramps</strong></td>
<td>• Overworked muscles</td>
<td>• Painful muscle spasms</td>
<td>• Rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(sore)</td>
<td>• Dehydration (lack of water)</td>
<td>• Muscles cramps (Usually calves, thighs and shoulders)</td>
<td>• Hydration with commercially available electrolyte solutions (e.g. Gatorade)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Low electrolytes</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Stretching and massaging the affected muscles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fatigue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heat Exhaustion</strong></td>
<td>• Low fluid intake</td>
<td>• Weakness—feeling sick</td>
<td>• Get out of the hot environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(sick)</td>
<td>• Fluid and electrolyte losses through sweating</td>
<td>• Lightheaded (especially while standing up)</td>
<td>• Stop activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Excessive activity often a contributing factor</td>
<td>• Nausea, vomiting</td>
<td>• Cool down—rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Headache</td>
<td>• Replace fluids and electrolytes (sips)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Skin moist, may be “cool and clammy”</td>
<td>• Prevent recurrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Consider calling 9-1-1 or get medical attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heat Stroke</strong></td>
<td>• Body cooling system overwhelmed</td>
<td>• Severely altered mental status (confused, lethargic, disoriented, combative)</td>
<td><strong>CALL 9-1-1, GET HELP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(serious/life threatening)</td>
<td>• Severe dehydration and/or excessive activity</td>
<td>• Possibly unconscious</td>
<td>• Cool the person down with whatever means available (pour cool water over them, remove clothing, fan them, put ice packs at groin and armpits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Seizures are common</td>
<td>• Repeat if necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Hot skin (may be moist or dry)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**During a Heat Wave**

- Do “check ins” during and after the hottest part of the day.
- Avoid direct sun and heat.
- Minimize activity during the hottest part of the day, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Stay cool in an area with air-conditioning or an electric fan.
- Drink water and other fluids throughout the day and evening.
- Avoid caffeine, sugar & alcohol.
- Do not ever leave people or pets alone in parked cars.
- Wear light-colored, lightweight, loose fitting clothing.
- Eat small meals. Avoid fats and proteins. Avoid cooking; eat leftovers.
- Close blinds, drapes, doors and windows to keep the heat out.
- Open windows and doors only if it is cooler outside than inside.
- Keep electric lights turned down or off. They generate heat.
- If you have a baby, be aware of heat risks. Consider a cool (not cold) water bath.
- Listen to radio or watch TV for heat wave reports.
- Apply cool, damp towels to wrists and back of neck. Sit in front of a fan to increase evaporation.