

Kern County Public Health Provides Tips to Stay Safe During Heat Wave

Contact: Michelle Corson, Public Relations Officer, 661-868-0288

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Bakersfield, CA - Kern County Department of Public Health Services is reminding everyone to protect themselves from extremely hot temperatures. The National Weather Service reports that a long duration heat wave could bring moderate to high heat risk impacts across much of the San Joaquin Valley. An excessive heat watch is in effect for the San Joaquin Valley with the hotter temperatures expected Thursday through Sunday.

Extreme heat poses a substantial health risk, especially for vulnerable populations including young children, the elderly, those with chronic diseases or disabilities, and pregnant women. Heat-related illness includes: cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and death. Warning signs of heat-related illnesses may include heavy sweating, muscle cramps, weakness, headache and nausea. Vomiting, paleness, tiredness and dizziness can also be indicators of heat-related illness.

Tips to stay safe during this period of excessive heat:

- Drink plenty of water even if you are not thirsty. Avoid alcohol.
- Avoid outdoor physical exertion during the hottest parts of the day. Reduce exposure to the sun from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. when UV rays are strongest, and keep physical activities to a minimum during that time.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat to cover the face and neck and loose-fitting clothing to keep cool and to protect your skin from the sun.
- Regularly check on any elderly relatives or friends who live alone. Many may be on medications which increase likelihood of dehydration.
- To prevent overheating, use cool compresses, misting, showers and baths. Seek immediate medical attention if you experience a rapid, strong pulse, you feel delirious or have a body temperature above 102 degrees.
- Never leave infants, children, elderly or pets in a parked car. It can take as little as 10 minutes for the temperature inside a car to rise to levels that can kill.
- Wear sunglasses that provide 100 percent UVA and UVB protection. Chronic exposure to the sun can cause cataracts.
- Liberally apply sunscreen (at least SPF 15) 15 minutes before venturing outdoors and re-apply at least every two hours – sunscreen may reduce the risk of skin cancer.
- The County of Kern will open Cooling Centers when temperatures are forecasted by the NWS to exceed certain highs. For more information visit:
<http://www.co.kern.ca.us/pio/coolingcenters.aspx>