# HEAT TIPS

## Heat Wave: Take it Seriously

Hot weather makes our bodies work harder—just to get rid of the heat! People with heart or lung problems should "cool it" on any hot day. When two very hot days are joined with hot nights and high humidity, we have a dangerous heat wave that could hurt a lot of people. In Milwaukee a HEAT HEALTH ACTION NOTICE will be issued. Then you'll know we all really need to take care of ourselves…and others!

## People at Higher Risk of Heat-Related Illness

- Older adults
- Infants and young children
- People with disabilities
- Chronic heart or lung problems
- Overweight persons
- Those who work outdoors or in hot settings
- Users of some medications: especially some drugs for mental disorders, movement disorders, allergies, depression and heart or circulatory problems
- Isolated persons who won't know when or how to cool off or call for help

## Be Prepared for Heat Before it Happens

**Hook up with help:** Isolated elderly or disabled persons in Milwaukee County can enroll in the Daily Telephone Reassurance Program of the Milwaukee County Department on Aging (289-6874). They will phone daily during a Heat Health Event to make sure the person is doing OK. Or, make arrangements to be checked by a relative, friend or neighbor you trust.

**Follow weather reports:** Whenever temperatures reach the 90s it's wise to keep it cool. Watch for the "Heat Index," a number that uses heat and relative humidity or heat and dew point to predict health effects (similar to the Wind Chill Factor in winter). A Heat Index in the 90s tells you to slow down; above 100 it's a real hazard! When it's hot and humid without relief for two days, or if you observe a HEAT HEALTH ACTION NOTICE in the news, it's an emergency and time to think of disabled or aged family members and neighbors who may need help. You can also check on the weather by visiting the National Weather Service website at www.crh.noaa.gov/mkx

**Plan in advance to keep cool:** Do your windows open if needed? Do you have drapes or blinds to keep direct sun out of your home? Is there a cool basement, room with an air conditioner, or other nearby place to cool off? Who can you call for help or health questions, and who will check in on you if you need it?

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## Beat the Heat This Way:

- **Keep your living space cool.** Cover windows to keep direct sun out. 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 hot air out of the window, rather than to blow hot air on your body. Basements or ground floors are often cooler than upper floors.
- **NEVER leave children, disabled persons or pets in a car—even briefly!** Temperatures in a car can become life-threatening within minutes.
- **Slow Down.** Limit physical activity. Plan any outings or exertion for the coolest parts of the day (early morning or after dark).
- **Drink plenty. Eat lightly.** Your body needs plenty of water or juice (but avoid alcohol or caffeine). Don't wait for thirst—drink frequently through the day. Avoid hot or heavy meals.
- **Infants should drink breast milk or formula** to get the right balance of water, salts and energy. Don't dilute formula beyond what the instructions say unless instructed by your doctor. You may supplement your infant's fluids with an additional 4 to 8 ounces of water per day.
- **Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothes,** and add a hat or umbrella to keep your head cool. Don't forget to use sunscreen!
- **Easy ways to cool off** include a cool (not cold) bath or shower (works faster than an air-conditioner!); a trip to an air-conditioned lobby or the basement; or cold wet rags applied to neck, head and limbs.
- **Don't stop medicines unless your doctor says so.** Take extra care to stay cool, and ask your doctor or pharmacist for any special heat advice.

**GET COOL or get help NOW if you feel:** Dizziness, Headache, Muscle Cramps, Weakness, Nausea or Vomiting

**CALL 911 for these symptoms:** Hot, dry skin, Confusion, Unconsciousness, Chest Pain, or Shortness of Breath

## Numbers to Call for Help

**211 Milwaukee at IMPACT** . . . . . **211**
A central access point for information about services available in the community

**City of Milwaukee Health Department** . . . . . **286-3521**
Health information, advice and referral during Watch, Advisory and Warning events . . .(TTY 286-2025)

**Aging Resource Center of Milwaukee County** (24 hours) . . . . . **289-6874**
Assistance and information for adults aged 60 and over . . . . . .(TTY 289-8591)

**American Red Cross** 24-hour recorded heat tips message . . . . . **299-9102**

**The Salvation Army** . . . . . **228-8496**
Assistance and information for vulnerable children, adults and families . . . . . .(After hours: 265-6360)

*...And remember to make frequent checks on elderly, ill or disabled relatives, friends or neighbors when a heat wave strikes…and help them keep cool.*

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Think Health Act Now!
CITY OF MILWAUKEE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Tom Barrett, Mayor
Bevan K. Baker, Commissioner of Health
www.milwaukee.gov/health

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