



# News Release

## Department of Health and Wellness

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS STRESS CAUTION WHEN OUTDOORS

*Department of Health and Wellness Offers Tips to Protect Against Extreme Heat*

Now that the days are longer and record hot temperatures are predicted for this summer, it is important for residents to take extra precautions to avoid heat-related deaths or illnesses. The elderly, very young, and people with mental illness and chronic diseases are at higher risk for heat-related death or illness. According to a recent report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), concern over the potential future health impacts of excessive heat events may become more frequent, or more severe, or both in the United States.

Over the past decade, the mortality rate in Atlanta from heat exposure has been steadily on the rise. “Just having basic knowledge of heat exposure prevention can protect and save many lives,” says Dr. Kim Turner, Interim Health Director of the Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness. “Air-conditioning is the number one protective factor against heat-related illness and death and the County encourages residents to utilize its facilities such as the health centers, public libraries and multipurpose senior centers to stay cool.”

The CDC and the Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness offer the following tips for extreme heat exposure:

- Know the signs for **heat exhaustion**: heavy sweating; paleness; muscle cramps; tiredness; weakness; dizziness; headache; nausea or vomiting; fainting; skin may be cool and moist; pulse rate fast and weak; breathing fast and shallow. **Heat stroke**: extremely high body temperature (above 103°F); red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating); rapid strong pulse; throbbing headache; dizziness and nausea. Should these symptoms occur after exposure to heat, seek medical attention.
- Drink more fluids (nonalcoholic), regardless of activity level. Don't wait until you are thirsty. Don't drink liquids that contain caffeine, alcohol or large amounts of sugar – they can cause the loss of body fluids. Avoid very cold drinks-they can cause stomach cramps.
- Stay indoors and, if possible stay in an air conditioned place. The County has designated its senior multipurpose centers and health centers as cooling stations for residents.

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- Electric fans may provide limited comfort, but when the temperature is in the high 90s, fans will not prevent heat-related illness. Take a cool shower or bath to lower body temperature.
- Wear lightweight, light colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- Never leave anyone in a closed, parked vehicle.
- Limit outdoor activity to morning and evening hours.
- Cut down on outdoor exercise. If on a low-salt diet, talk with a doctor before drinking sports beverages.
- Rest often in shady places.
- Wear a wide brimmed hat and sunglasses. Use a sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher.

“All summertime activity, whether playing or working outside, must be monitored and balanced with actions that help keep the body cool,” says Dr. Turner.

For a list of county multipurpose senior facilities call the Department of Human Services at (404) 730-7944. For a list of health centers, call The Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness at (404) 730-1211. For guidance and information on the prevention of heat related illnesses, log-on to [www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb)

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