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HEAT ADVISORY DECLARED BY HEALTH OFFICIALS

Manchester health officials have declared a **Heat Advisory** in anticipation of persistent, high temperatures this week which will pose a health danger to the public, especially young children and elderly adults. People tend to suffer heat-related illness when the body's temperature control system is overloaded. Usually, the body cools itself by sweating, but in some cases sweating is not enough. When that happens, a person's body temperature rises rapidly. Very high body temperatures can damage the brain and other vital organs.

Several factors affect the body's ability to cool itself during extremely hot weather. When the humidity is high, sweat will not evaporate as quickly, preventing the body from releasing heat quickly. Other conditions that adversely affect temperature regulation include old age, obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, poor circulation, sunburn, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Understanding the inherent danger of extreme heat, health officials are making the following recommendations:

Drink Plenty of Fluids

Increase how much you drink regardless of your activity level. During heavy exercise in a hot environment, drink 2-4 glasses (i.e. 16-32 ounces) of cool fluid each hour. Plain water is the best fluid to drink since it is the easiest for your body to absorb. Avoid drinking very cold beverages (they can cause stomach cramps) and alcoholic drinks (they make you lose more fluid). During hot weather, you will need to drink more liquid than your thirst indicates. This is especially true for persons over the age of 65. (NOTE: if your doctor has prescribed a fluid-restricted diet or diuretics, you need to ask your doctor how much you should drink.)

Replace Salt & Minerals

Heavy sweating removes salt and minerals from the body. These are necessary for you and need to be replaced. The easiest and safest way is to eat a balanced meal and drink fruit juice or a sports beverage. Do not take salt tablets unless directed by your doctor. If you are on a low-salt diet, ask your doctor what to eat or drink, especially before drinking a sports beverage.

Wear Appropriate Clothing & Sunscreen

Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. In the hot sun, a wide-brimmed hat will provide shade and keep the head cool.

Use sunscreens that have a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher. Apply the sunscreen 30 minutes before going outdoors and reapply according to package instructions. Sunscreen protects you from sunburn, which can affect your body's ability to cool itself and causes a loss of body fluids.

Stay Cool Indoors

The best way to beat the heat is to stay in air-conditioned areas. If you do not have an air conditioner, consider visiting a shopping mall or public library for a few hours. Taking a cool shower or bath is also an effective way to cool off.

While an electric fan may be useful to increase comfort and to draw cool air into your home at night, it should not be your primary cooling device during a heat wave. When the temperature is in the high 90's or above, a fan will NOT prevent heat-related illness.

Schedule Outdoor Activities Carefully

If you must be out in the heat, plan your activities so that you are outdoors before 10:00 a.m. or in the evening after 6:00 p.m. While outdoors, rest frequently in a shady area. Resting periodically will give your body's thermostat a chance to recover. If exertion in the heat makes your heart pound and leaves you gasping for breath, STOP all activity; get into a cool area and rest. Also, you should rest if you become lightheaded, confused, weak or faint.

Use the Buddy System

When working in the heat, monitor the condition of your co-workers and have someone do the same for you. Heat-induced illness can cause a person to become confused or lose consciousness. If you are 65 years or older, have a friend or relative call to check on you twice a day during a heat wave. If you know any people in this age group, check on them at least twice a day.

Those at greatest risk of heat-related illness include: (1) infants up to 4-years of age; (2) people age 65 or older; (3) people who are overweight; (4) people who overexert during work or exercise; and (5) people who are ill or on certain medications.

Use Common Sense

Avoid hot foods and heavy meals – they add heat to your body. Do not leave infants or pets in a parked car. Dress infants in cool, loose clothing and make sure they drink enough liquids. Give your pet plenty of fresh water and leave the water in a shady area.

Be Alert for Heatstroke and Heat Exhaustion

Both of these ailments occur when your body becomes unable to control its temperature; your body's temperature rises quickly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. If emergency treatment is not taken quickly, death or permanent disability can occur. Warning signs of heatstroke and heat exhaustion can include hot dry skin, rapid pulse, throbbing, headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion, paleness, and unconsciousness. Call 911 should these symptoms occur.

Cooling Centers

Please note that the William B. Cashin Senior Center (151 Douglas Street) is open Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm and the Manchester City Library (405 Pine Street) is open Monday through Friday 8:30am to 5:30pm and are available to the public for cooling purposes.