

June 29, 2018

Hot Weather Health Advisory

The National Weather Service has issued a heat advisory for the Champlain Valley beginning Saturday, and for all of Vermont for Sunday and Monday. High temperatures are forecast to be in the 90s in many locations from Saturday through most of next week, with the forecasted heat index exceeding 100 degrees F on Sunday and Monday.

This level of heat is rarely experienced in Vermont, and will increase the risk for heat illnesses or exacerbate pre-existing medical conditions. Vermont data indicates that emergency department visits for heat-related illnesses begin to increase when temperatures reach the mid- to upper-80's, with impacts getting progressively worse as temperatures rise through the 90's.

Populations most affected

Individuals who are generally at higher risk for heat-related health impacts include: older adults, young children, homeless people, outdoor workers and hobbyists, pregnant women, people who are overweight, those with chronic medical conditions, disabilities or mental illness, people using recreational drugs or alcohol, and those using certain prescription medications. Risk is further elevated for those who live alone or do not have air conditioning. Dehydration and hot living conditions are the major concerns for these populations.

If you provide care or housing for people at higher risk for heat-related health impacts:

- Use social media to raise awareness – examples are provided in the attached Media Toolkit.
- Be familiar with symptoms of heat illnesses and first aid responses:
<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/warning.html>
- Have a plan for checking in on people at higher risk to make sure they stay hydrated and can stay cool in their location.
- Make sure that air conditioning or other cooling systems are in place and functioning.
- If cooling systems are not available, or malfunction, have a plan in place for providing emergency cooling or relocating people to a cooler location.
- Provide guidance on hydration, appropriate clothing, diet, and other ways to stay cool.
- Consider how medications could increase risk for dehydration and heat illnesses.
- Consider modifying or cancelling any strenuous activities during hot weather.
- Remember that hot weather can affect anyone. Be sure your organization has a heat management plan for employees and volunteers. Be aware of your own symptoms, and look out for your colleagues.

For more information about risk factors, symptoms and safety tips: healthvermont.gov/climate/heat Safety tips are available in English plus Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, French, Kirundi, Nepali, Somali and Spanish.

We are also attaching a **Hot Weather Media Toolkit**, which includes key messages about risks and prevention strategies and example social media messages. Please feel free to use the key messages and social media messages in your communications. Consider reaching out to partners that serve vulnerable populations in your area, and to organizers of upcoming events to help them prepare and consider modifying or canceling activities.

National Weather Service Hazardous Weather Outlook: www.weather.gov/btv/ehwo

Questions? Call the Vermont Department of Health/Environmental Health at 802-863-7220.