



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

Sept. 5, 2008

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COOL IT! BEAT THE WEEKEND HEAT AND HUMIDITY

Drink Plenty of Fluids; Limit Sun Exposure; Monitor Children, the Elderly, and Pets

With hot, humid weather expected to continue in San Diego County this weekend, the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) urges the public to monitor themselves and others when engaging in outdoor physical activity.

“We urge the public to take steps to protect themselves from excessive heat and sun exposure, especially with the added humidity,” said Supervisor Dianne Jacob, County of San Diego Board of Supervisors. “High humidity can make temperatures in the 90s feel like the 100s and also can slow the evaporation of sweat from the body, affecting the body’s ability to cool itself.”

Seniors and children may be especially vulnerable to high temperatures. Heat exhaustion or heat stroke can affect anyone, but can more easily occur in people who have difficulty regulating their body temperature, including children up to age 4, those 65 or older, people who are overweight, and people ill or on certain medications.

“To avoid suffering heat stroke or other heat related illness, we urge the public to drink plenty of nonalcoholic fluids and to be cautious of sun exposure during peak periods (10 a.m. – 4 p.m.) while outdoors,” said Dean Sidelinger, M.D., M.S. Ed., Deputy County Public Health Officer.

Signs of heat stroke include body temperature exceeding 103 degrees, lack of sweating, rapid pulse, headache, nausea, confusion, and even unconsciousness. If someone is suffering from these symptoms, cool the victim rapidly, to 101 or 102 degrees, and call 911.

Hot weather sometimes brings tragic consequences for seniors or others who may be house-bound and unable to get themselves to a cooler location.

“We encourage family, friends and neighbors to visit the elderly, disabled or ill to make sure they are keeping cool,” said Pam Smith, Director, HHSA Aging & Independence Services.

Children also need to be monitored when they’re out in hot weather, as they become engrossed in playing and may not notice they are dehydrated. And, never leave children or pets inside vehicles any time, even with the windows slightly open. Temperatures inside a vehicle can reach lethal levels in weather that seems moderate.

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When the heat rises, find a place to cool off, such as malls, movie theatres and restaurants. Some HHSA Aging & Independence Services' Cool Zones will also be open on Saturday. There are 130 Cool Zone locations where anyone can beat the heat. For information on Cool Zone sites and tips for staying cool, call 1-800-510-2020, or go to www.coolzones.org.

Recommendations for beating the heat include:

- Wear lightweight clothing
- Drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids, especially when outdoors or active
- Pace yourself when engaging in physical activity
- Take a cool shower, bath or sponge bath
- Call your healthcare provider if you feel you may be experiencing heat-related illness

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