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CITY OF MILWAUKEE HEALTH DEPARTMENT REMINDS CITIZENS OF HEAT HOTLINE – 414.286.3616

Be Alert to Heat-Related Symptoms and Illness

City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) Commissioner Bevan K. Baker, CHE reminds all area citizens that a heat health hotline is available through the department. Milwaukee area residents are encouraged to call **414.286.3616** if they have any questions, concerns, or need information on additional resources on how to stay cool during this extreme heat wave. As the National Weather Service (NWS) has issued a heat health advisory through this evening, the MHD hotline will be staffed until 7:00 p.m. this evening.

The (NWS) has forecasted heat indices of 105 to 110 degrees. Commissioner Baker advises area citizens to take appropriate protective measures as high temperatures create a risk to public health.

The people at greatest risk during extremely hot and humid weather are:

- Elderly persons and those who are isolated or live alone
- Infants and young children
- Those taking certain medications including mental health drugs
- Those with chronic health conditions such as obesity, heart and lung ailments
- Those who work outside for a living

Sustained temperatures in excess of 90 degrees Fahrenheit coupled with humidity levels in excess of 65% are the conditions which pose a risk of heat-related illness and death. General symptoms of **heat exhaustion** include fainting, rash, fatigue, and nausea. Skin may become clammy and moist. If symptoms of heat exhaustion are present, immediate action should be taken to reduce body temperature.

Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition that can happen very quickly. Hot, dry skin, the absence of sweat, nausea, confusion and unconsciousness are symptoms of heat stroke. Immediate medical attention is critical: call 911 and cool the victim.

To prevent heat exhaustion or heat stroke, individuals at highest risk should spend the hottest part of the day – typically between 12:00 noon and 6:00 p.m. - in a cool, preferably air-conditioned place.

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Individuals who do not have air conditioning in the home should try to get to a location that does, such as a public library, community center, theater, or shopping mall. People may also find some relief from the heat by going into their basements or to lower levels of their home.

Never leave pets or people, especially children and infants, unattended in cars--for even brief periods of time. Even with windows cracked open, temperatures inside a car can rise to life-threatening levels in a matter of minutes.

Make frequent checks on the status of elderly or ill relatives or neighbors. If necessary, move them to an air-conditioned environment during the hottest part of the day.

Strenuous activity should be avoided during the hottest part of the day. If such activity is absolutely unavoidable, drink plenty of fluids and take frequent breaks in air-conditioned or shaded areas.

Finally, the MHD recommends that the following precautions be taken:

- To avoid dehydration, make a point of drinking more fluids during hot weather. Rapid weight loss may be a sign of dehydration.
- Avoid drinking alcohol or caffeinated beverages.
- Use fans to increase ventilation unless temperatures exceed 90° F, at which point fans become ineffective in reducing heat-related illness.
- Cool showers, baths, and sponge baths can be used to reduce body temperatures. In addition, wet clothing has a cooling effect.
- Spending time in an air-conditioned space or even the basement will help prevent heat –related illness.

For more information on heat-related health concerns, call the MHD heat health hotline at 414.286.3616 or visit the City of Milwaukee Health Department website at www.milwaukee.gov/heat

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