

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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**GOV. EASLEY WARNS NORTH CAROLINIANS TO TAKE PRECAUTION
DURING HEAT WAVE**

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley today warned citizens across the state to take the necessary precautions to protect themselves from any heat-related health problems due to the heat wave North Carolina is experiencing. With the early arrival of high temperatures, the National Weather Service has issued a heat advisory today and forecasts for high temperatures to continue for about a week. Temperatures are predicted to rise into the upper 90s today and the heat index could climb to 105 degrees this afternoon.

“Summer weather has come early this year and everyone should take steps to avoid heat-related health problems,” said Easley. “During the heat wave I urge you to help make sure your family members and neighbors who are elderly or who have physical or medical conditions stay safe.”

The National Weather Service predicts that North Carolina will experience high temperatures, ranging from the mid 90s to 100, for at least a week. The evening temperatures will also be unusually high, staying in the mid 70s.

Those most at risk in this extremely hot weather include infants and children up to four years of age, people 65 or older, people who are excessively overweight or physically ill with conditions such as heart disease or high blood pressure, and those who are working outdoors and might overexert themselves during work or exercise.

The N.C. Departments of Health and Human Services and Crime Control and Public Safety offer these tips during the high temperatures to help avoid heat-related health problems:

- Do not leave infants, children, or pets in a parked car, even for just a few minutes. Car interiors can quickly heat up and cause serious injury or death.
- Drink plenty of fluids, preferably water, but avoid alcohol and large amounts of sugar. Do not wait until you are thirsty to drink.
- Heavy sweating removes salt and minerals from the body. If you exercise or work outside, drink two to four glasses of cool, non-alcoholic fluids each hour. A sports beverage may replace the salt and minerals you lose in sweat. However, if you are on a low-salt diet, talk with your doctor before drinking a sports beverage.

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- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. Protect yourself from the sun and keep cool by wearing a wide-brimmed hat along with sunglasses and by putting on sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher 30 minutes prior to going outside.
- Stay indoors and if at all possible, in an air-conditioned place. If your home does not have air conditioning, try to find a neighbor, relative or public place that does. Just a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat.
- Take a cool shower or bath.
- Avoid, as much as possible, using your stove and oven. This will help keep cooler temperatures in your home.
- If you are 65 years of age or older, have a friend or relative call to check on you twice a day during a heat wave. If you know someone in this age group, check on them at least twice a day.
- If you must be outdoors, try to limit your outdoor activity to morning and evening hours. When working in the heat, have plenty of water available and 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.

Heat cramps are the first sign of heat injury. Sweating depletes the body's salt and moisture and results in cramps in the abdomen, arms, or legs.

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. Warning signs include heavy sweating, muscle cramps, dizziness and headache. The skin may be cool and moist, the victim's pulse rate will be fast and weak, and breathing will be fast and shallow.

Heat stroke is the most serious heat related illness and can cause injury or death if not treated. Heat stroke occurs when the body's temperature rises rapidly, sweating mechanisms fail, and the body is unable to cool down. Body temperature may rise to 106 degrees or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Warning signs include red, hot, dry skin with no sweating; rapid, strong pulse; throbbing headache; dizziness; nausea; confusion; or unconsciousness.

For more specific tips about how to avoid heat-related injuries, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's web site at www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.asp.

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