

TO: Health Care Providers, Hospitals, Emergency Departments, Emergency Medical Services, Other Care Facilities, Town Health Officers

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-80s, with impacts getting progressively worse as temperatures rise through the 90s.

Populations Most Affected

Individuals who are generally at higher risk for heat-related health impacts include: older adults, young children, people who are homeless, 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 people who live alone or do not have air conditioning. Dehydration and hot living conditions are the major concerns for these populations.

Symptoms and First Aid

Muscle cramps, heavy sweating, nausea, headache or light-headedness may all indicate a heat illness. Most heat illnesses can be treated with fluids and by resting in a cooler place. If symptoms persist or get worse, or someone you are with seems confused or loses consciousness, dial 9-1-1 for immediate medical help. Learn more about symptoms and first aid at www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/warning.html

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

- Be prepared to treat a higher number of heat-related conditions than usual.
- 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.
- Have a plan for checking in on people at higher risk to make sure they stay hydrated and can stay cool in their location.
- Consider how hot conditions may affect a patient or client before sending them home.
- Consider how medications could increase risk for dehydration and heat illnesses.
- If staffing an event, make sure that event organizers are well prepared with water, cooling strategies, and plans to modify or cancel the event if needed.
- 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.

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

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

HAN Message Type Definitions

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Info Service Message: Provides general correspondence from the Vermont Department of Health, which is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.