

STAY SAFE IN EXTREME HEAT

Upper Merion Township reminds residents that during periods of extreme heat the Township building and Library are open as cooling centers.

Hot weather triggers a variety of medical emergencies. Even healthy people should take it easy during extremely high temperatures. Those who are pregnant or have respiratory or other health problems, children and the elderly must be especially careful. Stay out of the sun as much as possible.

The best ways to prevent a heat stress emergency are:

- Drink water before you're thirsty and drink often.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and sugary drinks.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Wear loose fitting clothing made of a breathable material.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or use an umbrella for shade.
- If you can, work and exercise in the cooler hours of the morning or evening.
- Slow down. Rest in the shade or a cool place when you can.

At home:

- Use air conditioners and fans. If you use a fan, make sure your windows are open to release trapped hot air.
- Use drapes, shades, or awnings in your home. Outdoor awnings can reduce the heat that enters the home by up to 80 percent.
- Take a cool shower or bath.
- Visit a friend with air conditioning or spend time in a cool place like a mall, library, senior center, or cooling center. Even a few hours in air conditioning during the hottest part of the day can help your body recover.

Remember:

- Never leave older people, children, or pets alone in cars.
- Check on older adults who live alone.

Heat-related injuries fall into three major categories:

- **Heat cramps** are muscular pains and spasms that occur often in the abdomen, arms, or calves when the body's electrolytes and salt are lost through the sweating process. Drink fluids that replace body electrolytes and salt, and spend time in cooler areas to reduce sweating. Seek medical attention if cramps persist for more than one hour.
- **Heat exhaustion** is a medical emergency that could include heavy sweating, headache, weakness, fatigue, dizziness, confusion, fainting, nausea, and vomiting. People who are most prone to heat exhaustion are 65 years old or older, or have high blood pressure, or work or exercise in a hot environment. When a person is suffering from heat exhaustion, they will perspire profusely and will most likely be pale. It is best treated by taking the patient to a cool place, applying cool compresses, taking a cool shower or bath, elevating the feet and giving the patient non-alcoholic fluids. The patient may need hospitalization and IV fluids to properly recover.
- **Heat stroke** is the worst heat-related injury and is a life-threatening medical emergency, Dial 9-1-1. The brain has lost its ability to regulate body temperature. The patient will be hot, reddish, and warm to the touch. Their temperature will be markedly high and there will be no perspiration. The patient will also be confused, nausea, or (in worst case scenarios) unconscious. If you see someone with these symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately. This is a medical emergency. Death will occur if not corrected in the hospital.