

Health Unit Media Release

For Immediate Release: May 25, 2010



Health Unit Issues Warning of High Heat and Humidity

Dr. Paula Stewart, Medical Officer of Health for the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit, issues a warning regarding high heat and humidity. It is still May and people haven't had the opportunity to adjust to higher temperatures. This may affect their ability to cope with the heat. Health Unit Staff are monitoring the situation closely. A Heat Alert will be issued if a combination of heat and high humidity lasts for several days and can be hazardous to your health.

Conditions during high heat and humidity have the potential to cause dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and in some cases death. **Everyone is at risk; however the following are in greater danger of being affected:**

- elderly
- people with chronic illness or who take certain medications
- infants and preschool children
- people who participate in physical activity or are involved in strenuous outdoor work for prolonged periods

During a heat warning, the public is strongly encouraged to check on a neighbour or a friend who may have a greater risk of suffering negative health consequences from the heat.

During very hot weather, everyone should take the following precautions:

- Drink lots of water and natural fruit juices (avoid alcohol and caffeine)
- Stay out of the hot sun or heat
- Whenever possible go to an air-conditioned room or building, including shopping malls and libraries
- If you don't have air-conditioning keep the blinds closed, the shades drawn and the lights off
- Avoid strenuous outdoor physical activity, reschedule sport practices
- Wear a hat, sunscreen, and light loose-fitting clothing
- Avoid heavy meals and using your oven
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about your medication and the heat
- Never leave a child or a pet unattended in a car
- Use a fan in or by a window but be aware fans may not be useful in conditions of extreme heat
- Take a cool bath or shower or visit a local pool or beach

Even short periods of exposure to high temperatures and smog can cause health problems. If you experience the following symptoms after exposure to extreme heat seek medical attention immediately:

- Nausea, dizziness, blurred vision
- Difficulty or rapid breathing
- Severe headache or confusion
- Convulsion
- Fever

For more information on how to protect your health during extreme heat, visit the health unit website at www.healthunit.org

For specific health heat-related questions call the Health Action Line at: 1-800-660-5853 or 613-345-5685.

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Contact: **Joan Mays, Manager of Health Protection, 613-345-5685**