



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **DON'T LET HEAT, MOSQUITOES SPOIL YOUR SUMMER** *Commonsense tips help prevent summer illness*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Summer has officially arrived in Tennessee, bringing scorching temperatures and the risk of West Nile Virus. Activities of daily life often mean exposing ourselves to extreme heat or going outdoors at times when mosquitoes carrying WNV may be active. The Department of Health is sharing simple tips that can help you reduce your risk of seasonal illness during the hot summer months.

Temperatures that soar into the 90s and beyond bring the risk for heat-related illness. Heat-related illnesses include heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat rash. Signs of heat-related illness include dizziness, heavy sweating, muscle cramps, rapid heart beat, nausea, headaches and cold/clammy skin.

“Heat-related illnesses and deaths are common, yet preventable problems,” said Health Commissioner Susan R. Cooper, MSN, RN. “When temperatures are extremely high, Tennesseans must make smart decisions about their exposure to heat. Avoid going outside during the hottest part of the day whenever possible, and be sure never to leave anyone unattended in a car.”

It's also important to take steps to protect and care for the very young and the elderly, who are at greater risk in extreme heat. People with chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, obesity and lung disease are also at an increased risk of heat-related illnesses.

Heat stroke is the most life-threatening heat-related illness. Each year, about 400 people nationwide die from heat stroke. Heat stroke occurs when the body is unable to regulate its temperature, which rises quickly without the ability to cool down. If emergency treatment is not provided, heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability. Symptoms include body temperature above 103 degrees Fahrenheit; red, hot and dry skin without sweating; rapid, strong pulse; throbbing headache; dizziness; nausea; confusion and loss of consciousness.

Call for immediate medical help if you believe you or another person is experiencing heat stroke. While waiting on emergency assistance, get the victim to a shady area, cool him or her rapidly using cool water and monitor body temperature until it reaches 101 to 102 degrees Fahrenheit, and do not give the victim any fluids to drink.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers a few simple steps to avoid these preventable heat-related illnesses.

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- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink. Remember to consume non-alcoholic, low-sugar drinks in hot weather.
- **Replace salt and minerals.** Heavy sweating can deplete your body's salt and minerals. Non-alcoholic drinks, like sports drinks, can help you replenish these reserves.
- **Wear appropriate clothing and sunscreen.** Choose lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing, as well as a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses with UV protection. Wear SPF 15 or higher sunscreen every day.
- **Schedule outdoor activities carefully.** Try to limit outdoor activity to morning and evening hours with rest breaks in shady areas, if available. UV rays are strongest and do the most damage during midday hours.
- **Pace yourself.** If you are unaccustomed to working or exercising in a hot environment, start slowly and increase effort gradually. If your heart is pounding or you are gasping for breath, stop the activity and rest in a cool, shady area.
- **Stay cool indoors.** If your home does not have air conditioning, go to the mall or library to cool off. Cool showers or baths, and keeping your stove and oven off, are other ways to cool down inside.
- **Use the buddy system.** Partner with a friend and watch each other for signs of heat-related illness. Senior citizens are more susceptible, so if you know someone over age 65, check on them over the phone twice a day.

For more information about heat-related illnesses, including prevention and treatment tips, visit the CDC's Extreme Heat Safety Web site at [http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat\\_guide.asp](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.asp).

As you schedule outdoor activities to avoid adverse affects from the heat, make sure you are protecting yourself and loved ones from West Nile Virus too. This illness is most commonly transmitted to humans through mosquito bites. Most mosquitoes likely to transmit WNV bite at dawn and dusk. The best way to prevent WNV infection is to avoid mosquito bites. These simple tips can help.

- If you must go outside during dawn and dusk, use insect repellent or wear long sleeves, long pants and socks.
- Eliminate standing water near your home, which can serve as a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Many containers, even those as small as a bottle cap, can hold enough water for mosquitoes to breed.
- Keep windows and doors closed or cover them with screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.
- Use insect repellent containing either DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535.

For more information about West Nile Virus, visit the TDOH Web site at <http://health.state.tn.us/ceds/WNV/wnvhome.asp>.

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