



STATE OF MARYLAND

# ***DHMH PRESS RELEASE***

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*Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **State Health Department Issues Hot Weather Advisory** *All Maryland jurisdictions but Garrett County are affected*

BALTIMORE, MD (August 8, 2007) -- The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) has issued a hot weather advisory in response to a National Weather Service forecast for an expected heat index of at least 105 degrees today in Baltimore City and all Maryland counties except Garrett. This is the second heat alert day in a row for these jurisdictions.

The heat index, also known as apparent temperature, measures what the temperature 'feels like' when temperature and humidity levels are combined.

A temperature of 95 degrees, combined with a humidity reading of 50 percent, will produce an apparent temperature of 105 degrees. Or, a temperature of 90 degrees and a humidity reading of 67 percent will feel like 105 degrees.

"Individuals must be especially cautious and take precautions to reduce the risk of heat stroke and heat exhaustion," says DHMH Secretary John M. Colmers. "These two serious health conditions typically occur during hot and humid conditions."

Individuals particularly vulnerable to the effects of hot, humid conditions include older adults, young children, those who are overweight, have heart disease, diabetes or other chronic health conditions.

"It is extremely important for you to check on your elderly relatives, friends and neighbors," Secretary Colmers said. "You never know when they may be in distress or need help."

Symptoms of heatstroke, the most serious of the two illness, is a medical emergency characterized by a body temperature of greater than 105 degrees and may include dry, reddened skin, convulsions, disorientation, delirium and coma. Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness and because of dehydration, may include extreme weakness, muscle cramps, nausea, or headache.

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Some common precautions to take to reduce the risk of heat illnesses are to:

- \* drink plenty of fluids such as water and fruit juices to prevent dehydration - beware that alcohol can impair the body's sweat mechanism;
- \* wear loose-fitting, lightweight, and light colored clothing; protect yourself from direct sunlight by staying in the shade or by wearing sunscreen, a hat, and sunglasses;
- \* never leave young children or pets in a car even with the windows cracked.

Since late May, Maryland has recorded 13 deaths related to hyperthermia.

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