



LET'S GET READY FOR SUMMER HEAT

Edition 08 | HEALTH EQUITY BEAT
A HEALTH EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

Summers in Erie County are getting hotter. The number of days it is warmer than 90°F (32°C) increases each year. Rising summer temperatures can impact our health. Sun and heat can make working and playing outside uncomfortable and unsafe. Planning for hot weather will keep you cool, safe and healthy this summer.

● WHY SHOULD WE PREPARE?

Hot summer weather can cause health problems called heat illnesses. Heat illness can include **heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.**

Everyone can be affected by heat illness. Some people are more likely to be affected by heat, including:

- babies and young children
- older adults and elders
- people dependent on others for care

And people who:

- live alone
- have health conditions like high blood pressure
- work or live outside
- are pregnant
- live in upper-level apartments
- do not have air conditioning
- take antihistamines, antipsychotics, beta-blockers (heart medicine) and diuretics (water pills)

Pets are susceptible to heat illness, too.

PREVENT HEAT EMERGENCIES

Here are tips to help you stay cool and safe:

- **LOOK** at the weather report. Pay attention to when the hottest part of the day will be and plan around it.
- **DRINK** more water than usual. Do not wait until you feel thirsty to drink.
- **WEAR** loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing. Cotton and linen are best.
- **FIND** shade where you can. Bring a hat or umbrella.
- **STAY** in air-conditioned buildings as much as possible. Look for cooling centers in your area.
- **AVOID** using your oven or stove to cook.
- **EAT** hydrating foods like melon and cucumber.
- **TAKE** cool showers or baths.
- **TAKE** breaks when working or playing outside.
- **AVOID** or limit intense physical activity.
- **CHECK** on your loved ones, neighbors and anyone who lives alone.
- **KNOW** the early signs of heat illness.
- **DO NOT WAIT** for a heat cramp to start cooling down. Stay cool from the beginning.

All heat emergencies are preventable!



Erie County
Department of
Health

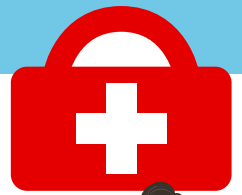


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www.erie.gov/health-equity

YOUR HEALTH & HEAT



Everyone manages heat differently. Chronic health conditions, medications and stress can make it difficult to stay cool in hot weather. Learn more about heat-related illnesses below.

HEAT RASH

Skin irritation caused by heat and sweat. Symptoms include painful bumps or a red rash on the skin. Keep the rash area dry to soothe.

HEAT CRAMPS

Caused by loss of salt and moisture in the body, usually due to extra sweat. Cramps feel like pain or spasm in a muscle. Drink liquids and massage gently to relieve pain.

DEHYDRATION

When your body uses or loses more fluids than you take in. Signs and symptoms include dry mouth, dizziness, extreme thirst and fainting. Can be reversed by drinking more fluids.

HEAT EXHAUSTION

Weakness due to serious dehydration. Signs and symptoms: heavy sweating, headache, clammy skin and nausea. Rest, drink water and seek medical care if symptoms continue.

HEAT STROKE

Serious illness due to high body temperature. Signs and symptoms include fast heart rate, hot skin, confusion, slurred speech, irrational behavior and fainting. Any of the above illnesses may also occur. Call 911 for emergency medical care. Move the person to shade, hydrate (if alert) and cool with wet cloths.

FIRST AID



If you think someone is suffering from heat illness:

- **Call 911** for emergency care if the person is not alert or if lips and fingernails are blue.
- **Move** the person to rest in a shaded place and fan them to cool down.
- **Hydrate** with a cool drink if they are alert enough to drink safely.
- **Apply** cool, wet cloths to the skin or soak clothing in cool water. Focus on the back of the neck, wrists and forehead.
- **Massage** muscles gently for muscle cramps.
- **Seek** medical care if any symptoms persist.

OVEREXERTION

Easy does it! Extra strain on your body due to physical activity during hot weather can lead to exhaustion and heat stroke. Plan to take breaks.



WHEN IT IS HOT...

- **Do not wait for signs of heat illness** to take steps to stay cool and hydrated. Prevent heat illness by preparing for the weather each day.
- **Do not leave children in hot cars.** When it is 75°F outside, it is at least 105°F inside a car.
- **Avoid alcohol AND caffeine.** These substances make it hard to cool down. They can also cause dehydration.
- **Do not use rubbing alcohol on skin.** It can cause an increase in body temperature.
- **Know the side effects** of medications you take. Heat may impact how you feel.
- **Do not use medicines used to treat fever,** such as aspirin, acetaminophen or NSAIDs. These medications do not work on high body temperatures due to heat stroke.

DRINK!



Prevent or reverse dehydration by replacing salt and moisture in your body. Hydrate with water. Look for a sports drink with low or no sugar. Make a salted drink by adding one teaspoon of salt per quart of water. Eat hydrating foods like melon.

SEE YOUR PEE

The color of your urine mixed in toilet water can tell you how hydrated you are. Keep track of the color throughout the day and keep drinking water, even when you are hydrated.

HYDRATED



DEHYDRATED

DRINK WATER EVEN IF YOUR COLOR IS LIGHT

WEATHER WATCH

Hot weather warnings are reported by the news and local government. The weather forecast is an informed guess of temperature and moisture in the air. Here are some terms to look out for.

HEAT INDEX

A number that represents what the outside temperature **feels like** on your skin. It is the actual outside temperature and relative humidity combined. It is shown as a temperature.

MORE INFO ABOUT HEAT INDEX

To learn more about how heat and humidity can feel in our bodies, visit [weather.gov/safety](https://www.weather.gov/safety).

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

The amount of water vapor in the air shown as a percent. High humidity can feel sticky. Low humidity can feel dry.

EXCESSIVE HEAT WATCH

Temperatures might become extra hot in the next 12-48 hours. Prepare to stay cool and hydrated. Look for shade.

EXCESSIVE HEAT ADVISORY

Temperatures will be extra hot in the next 12-48 hours. Find shade and take extra steps to stay cool and hydrated. Consider limiting or cancelling outdoor work and play.

DID YOU KNOW?

The hottest time of day during summer is between 3pm-5pm.



KEEP COOL IN YOUR COMMUNITY

We are all in this together. When it is hot, take extra care to check on loved ones, neighbors and elders. Invite your neighbors to walk around the mall. Meet with friends at a splash pad. Spend an afternoon at an Erie County library. Ride an air conditioned NFTA bus to see a friend. All Erie County parks have shelters with shade cover. Trees offer lots of shade, too. **Have a picnic!** Bring foods that hydrate and cool your body. Here are some options:

- melon
- apples
- tomatoes
- celery
- beans & lentils
- cherries
- grapes
- pears
- mangoes
- lettuce
- fennel
- radish
- greens
- berries
- cardamom

WORKING OUTSIDE?


If your job requires you to work outside in the heat, your employer should give you time for **acclimation**. Acclimation is the slow exposure to heat over a few days. This is so your body can get used to the heat safely.

PLAYING OUTSIDE?

Whether you are hiking a trail or relaxing in a park, it is important to remember to consider how heat will impact the time you spend outside.

SWIMMING

When cooling down in water, take steps to prevent drowning. Children under 5 and teenagers have the highest drowning rates.

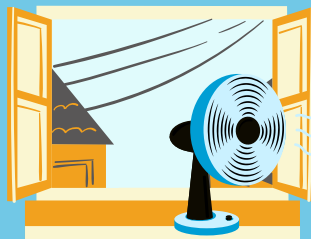
Never swim alone! Find safety tips for swimming and boating here: on.ny.gov/45rt4GO 

WEAR SUNSCREEN

No matter your skin type, UV rays from the sun can cause dangerous damage to your skin. Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the U.S. Sunscreen can prevent damage.



WHEN TO USE A FAN



An electric fan is a great way to stay cool. Put the fan in front of an open window so it blows cool air in from the outside.

Do not use a fan if the temperature inside or outside of your home is 95 degrees or higher. It will blow hot air and can become dangerous.

DON'T FORGET PETS

When it comes to extreme heat, our furry friends need the same care we do. Offer pets extra water and shade when it is hot. Cool overheated pets with ice packs and ice cubes. Never leave a pet in a car unattended, even for short trips.

ERIE COUNTY HEAP COOLING ASSISTANCE

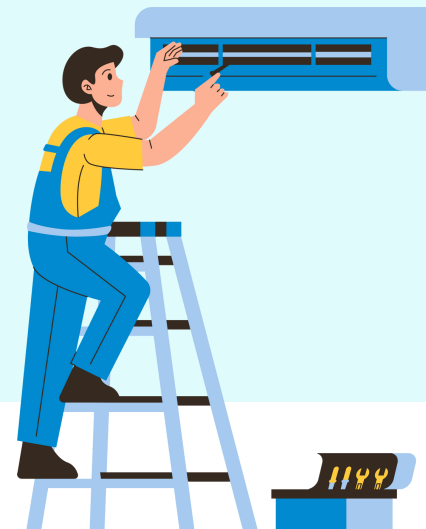
Did you know? The Erie County Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) offers cooling assistance to eligible residents. You can receive up to \$800 to buy and install an air conditioning unit in your home or apartment.

- The HEAP application opens up in May each year.
- The HEAP application closes when funds run out.

Call to apply: (716) 858-7644

Apply in person: 460 Main St, Buffalo NY 14202

Check eligibility: www.erie.gov/heap/cooling-benefits



SUMMER SAFETY RESOURCES

COOLING SHELTERS

When temperatures hit 85 degrees, Erie County will open up extra community spaces for people to cool down. To find a cooling shelter or other air conditioned community space near you:

Call WNY 211

Dial 211

Visit erie.gov/staycool

READY ERIE APP

The **ReadyErie preparedness app** can help you plan for emergencies.

Visit www.erie.gov/readyerie



FREE SAFETY TRAINING

Erie County First Aid & Stop the Bleed Training (716) 858-7109

Erie County Hands Only CPR training & CPR resources (716) 858-7690

Erie County Opioid Overdose Recognition & Naloxone (Narcan) Use Trainings (716) 858-8701

Upstate New York Poison Prevention Training upstate.edu/poison/community/train

NYS CITIZEN PREPAREDNESS CORPS

New York State offers classes to help you prepare for emergencies. Learn how to plan, build supply kits, increase awareness and get involved in emergency response. Take a FREE class in your local area and receive a FREE emergency supply bag. To find a class near you, visit: www.dhSES.ny.gov/citizen-preparedness-corps

For videos available in 13 languages, visit: bit.ly/NYSemercencymultilingual



THIS IS A PUBLICATION OF THE

ERIE COUNTY OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY

This publication is available in 5 languages on our website and in print.



The Erie County Office of Health Equity's vision is for everyone in Erie County to achieve maximum health and wellness. The Office of Health Equity is located within the Erie County Department of Health.

Want to learn more?

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