

Richland County

Health and Human Services

Randy Jacquet, Director

Date: July 16, 2012

To: Richland County Media

From: Marianne Stanek
Richland County HHS Public Health

Re: **Heat Stroke and Heat Exhaustion**

The high temperatures that we are experiencing increase the risk of heat-related illnesses, especially for those who are sensitive to the heat such as young children and the elderly.

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature—the body's temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. Body temperatures may rise to 106 degrees F within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if treatment is not provided.

Warning signs of a heat stroke are:

- An extremely high body temperature
- Red, hot, and dry skin
- Rapid strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Unconsciousness

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days if exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids exists. Those most prone to heat exhaustion are elderly people, those with high blood pressure, and those working or exercising in a hot environment.

Warning signs of heat exhaustion:

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps

(more)

- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea/vomiting
- Fainting

The skin may be cool and moist. The pulse rate will be fast and weak, and breathing will be fast and shallow. If heat exhaustion is untreated, it may progress to heat stroke. Seek medical attention if symptoms worsen or last longer than one hour.

To cool the body during heat exhaustion:

- Drink cool, nonalcoholic beverages
- Rest
- Take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath
- Seek an air conditioned environment
- Wear lightweight clothing.

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