



HEALTH ADVISORY:

Extreme Heat

June 15, 2022

This document will be updated as new information becomes available.

St. Louis County Department of Public Health (DPH) is now using 4 types of documents to provide important information to medical and public health professionals, and to other interested persons:

Health Alerts convey information of the highest level of importance which warrants immediate action or attention from Missouri health providers, emergency responders, public health agencies, and/or the public.

Health Advisories provide important information for a specific incident or situation, including that impacting neighboring states; may not require immediate action.

Health Guidances contain comprehensive information pertaining to a particular disease or condition, and include recommendations, guidelines, etc. endorsed by DPH.

Health Updates provide new or updated information on an incident or situation; can also provide information to update a previously sent Health Alert, Health Advisory, or Health Guidance; unlikely to require immediate action.

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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

June 15, 2022

FROM: Dr. Faisal Khan, Acting Director of the Department of Public Health
Howard Hayes, Director of the Department of Human Services

SUBJECT: Extreme Heat

The St. Louis region is experiencing extreme heat and humidity this week, conditions that can be dangerous for many. The St. Louis County Department of Public Health and the St. Louis County Department of Human Services urge all residents to avoid being outdoors and to stay in air-conditioned spaces as much as possible. Among the most vulnerable to extreme heat are infants and young children, individuals aged 65 and older, people who work outdoors and those with preexisting medical conditions.

Here are some tips to stay safe during the current heat wave:

- **Stay Cool Indoors:** Stay in air conditioning indoors as much as possible. If your home does not have air conditioning, go to a shopping mall or public library or find a cooling center by calling the United Way Hotline at 211. Understand that electric fans alone will not prevent heat-related illness. Taking a cool shower or bath or moving to an air-conditioned place is a much better way to cool off.
- **Wear Appropriate Clothing:** Choose lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- **Schedule Outdoor Activities Carefully:** Limit outdoor activity to morning and evening hours. Rest often in shady areas so that your body has a chance to recover. Cut down on exercise during the heat. If exertion in the heat makes your heart pound and leaves you gasping for breath, STOP all activity.
- **Wear Sunscreen:** Sunburn affects your body's ability to cool down and can make you dehydrated. If you must go outdoors, wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses and apply sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher 30 minutes prior to going out. Continue to reapply it according to the package directions. Look for sunscreens that say "broad spectrum" or "UVA/UVB protection" on their labels.
- **Do Not Leave Children or Pets in Cars:** Cars can quickly heat up to dangerous temperatures, even with a window cracked open. While anyone left in a parked car is at risk, children are especially at risk of heat stroke and heat-related death.
- **Keep Your Pets Hydrated:** Provide plenty of fresh water for your pets, and leave the water in a shady area.
- **Avoid Hot and Heavy Meals:** They add heat to your body.
- **Drink Plenty of Fluids:** Drink more fluids, regardless of how active you are. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. Stay away from very sugary or alcoholic drinks, which cause you to lose more body fluid.
- **Replace Salt and Minerals:** Heavy sweating removes salt and minerals from the body that need to be replaced. A sports drink can replace the salt and minerals you lose in sweat.



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As mentioned above, anyone in St. Louis County who cannot find air-conditioned spaces this week is urged to locate a cooling center by calling the United Way's 211 hotline. A United Way team member will connect callers to area locations. The Department of Human Services has expanded its emergency shelter overflow program in conjunction with its network of community service providers. Those who need an air-conditioned place to stay overnight can call the 211 hotline.

We know some residents are hesitant to run their air conditioners because of concern about utility bills. Through the county's Emergency Rental Assistance Program, utility bill help is available. For more information on that program, please call 1-855-582-3973 or visit www.stlouiscountymo.gov.

Also, the Department of Public Health recommends that residents sit their trash, recycling and yard waste at the curb the night before their collection day. The extreme heat is leading some area haulers to start their pickup routes earlier than normal to beat the heat and keep drivers as safe as possible during their shifts. Area haulers are also dealing with driver shortages which may potentially lead to delays in some services. Haulers are actively recruiting and training new drivers to meet the St Louis region's needs.