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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Learn Tips for Coping with a Heatwave

Be Cool When It's Hot

Somerset County Freeholder Sara Sooy, public health and safety liaison, urges residents to stay hydrated and as cool as possible during this stretch of extreme summer heat.

“It’s very important to drink a lot of water and not get over-heated during extreme heat conditions,” said Somerset County Health Officer Namitha Reddy, MD, MPH. “By staying cool you may prevent heat-related illnesses and other health issues from worsening.”

The Somerset County Department of Health has provided a list of cooling center locations, visit <http://bit.ly/Coolinglocations>.

Listed below are tips for managing the heat:

Keep cool - Stay indoors during the hottest times of the day (between the hours of 12 and 4 p.m.); look to plan outdoor activities in the morning and evening hours; seek air-conditioned locations such as libraries and malls; take cool showers or baths; avoid direct sunlight; wear loose, light-colored clothing and wear a hat or use an umbrella to block the sun.

Drink plenty of fluids - Replace the fluids you lose through sweat by drinking water. Don’t wait until you’re thirsty to drink. Avoid alcohol, caffeinated beverages and sugary drinks. Bring a beverage with you to sip frequently during the day.

Signs of heat exhaustion and heatstroke - Learn to recognize the symptoms of heat exhaustion, which includes muscle cramps, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea and vomiting. If you see someone with these symptoms, move them to a cooler location, have them rest for a few minutes and then they should slowly drink a cool beverage. Seek immediate medical attention if their condition does not improve.

Heat exhaustion can lead to heatstroke, which can cause death or permanent disability unless treated immediately. Symptoms of heatstroke include an extremely

high body temperature (above 103°F); red, hot, dry skin; a rapid, and strong pulse; nausea, confusion and unconsciousness. If you think someone has heatstroke, seek medical attention immediately, and begin cooling them down, as you would for heat exhaustion.

Be sure to check on family, friends and neighbors who are at high risk for heat exhaustion, such as older adults, young children and people with mental illness and chronic diseases. Never leave children, pets, or those who require special care in a parked car during periods of intense summer heat. Young and healthy individuals also are at risk for heat exhaustion if they participate in strenuous physical activities during hot weather.

Cooling centers – If you need a place to go for relief from the heat, a number of municipalities in Somerset County have established temporary cooling centers. **A** cooling center is a facility, such as a senior center or community center, where people may go to enjoy air-conditioning and get relief from excessive heat. In case of a heat wave, there are many cooling centers located around Somerset County that are open during regular business hours. Please visit the following link to view details about cooling centers located throughout Somerset County <http://bit.ly/Coolinglocations>

Seniors should also keep the following tips in mind:

Individuals age 65 and above are more prone to heat stress than younger people because it is more difficult for them to adjust to temperature changes, and they are more likely to have a medical condition or take medications that impair the body's ability to regulate its temperature. Older individuals can take advantage of the county senior centers, operated by the Somerset County Office on Aging and Disability Services. These facilities offer a cool daytime respite and a variety of educational, recreational and entertaining activities for adults age 65 and older. For a list of county-operated senior centers visit <http://bit.ly/SeniorCenterCooling>

Consult with your doctor or pharmacist – If you have a health condition, or are age 65 and above you may be more prone to heat exhaustion. Be aware that some medications can increase sensitivity to the heat. Unless directed by a health care professional, do not take salt tablets or use products that may interfere with your medication or adversely affect your medical condition.

Older adults should have a friend or caregiver check on them - Those who live alone should ask someone to check on them during a heatwave to ensure that they are not exhibiting signs of heat-related illness. If no one is available, contact the county [Office on Aging and Disability Services](#) to register for the [Telephone Reassurance Program](#).

What is the Telephone Reassurance Program? - This is a free service that provides trained staff to conduct a daily wellness check via telephone. The service is provided to people who live alone and are isolated from the community due to their age, health conditions or living arrangements. This service provides a sense of reassurance and security and helps to enhance their quality of life.

For more information about how to prevent heat-related illness, visit the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/>, or the Somerset County Health Department's website at - <https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/government/public-health-safety/health-department/resources/extreme-heat-resources>

For more information about the county-operated senior centers, call the Somerset County Office on Aging & Disability Services toll-free at 1-888-747-1122.

To stay up to date with Somerset County events and information, sign up for [free email alerts](#) at www.co.somerset.nj.us/subscribe or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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