
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Stay Safe in the Summer Heat

GRAND RAPIDS – Hot, humid weather is in the forecast again today, with temperatures expected to reach highs in the upper eighties throughout most of this week. Children, the elderly, and pets are especially at risk of becoming ill in these temperatures. The Kent County Health Department wants everyone to take a few precautions to stay healthy during hot summer days.

Never leave children or animals in a parked vehicle unattended, even with windows cracked open. The temperature inside a parked car can reach 120 degrees or more in a matter of minutes. Heat stroke and death can occur in these dangerous situations. If you are leaving the car, take your children and/or pets with you. So far this year, 15 children have died after being left unattended in cars in the U.S., according to the San Francisco State University Department of Geosciences.

Elderly people have a much more difficult time dealing with heat. “People who are elderly may have trouble adjusting to changes in temperature,” says Adam London, Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “Also, some medications can cause adverse reactions to heat. If you have elderly family members or friends, check on them twice a day during these hot days.” If they appear to be suffering from dizziness, muscle weakness, cramping, vomiting, heavy sweating, or paleness, they may be suffering from heat exhaustion. Get them to a cool area, and seek medical treatment.

If you wait until you’re thirsty to drink, you may already be dehydrated. (Some people may be limited in the amount of fluid they drink due to certain conditions or medications. Check with your doctor to see how much you should drink while the weather is hot.) Drink non-alcoholic fluids often, and avoid alcohol or sugary-drinks, as they can cause you to dehydrate faster.

Be sure pets have fresh, clean drinking water. Keep them indoors or provide a shady place for them to stay out of the sun. Don’t let them overheat: keep strenuous activity and playtime short.

If you are looking for additional resources to help you during hot weather, the Heart of West Michigan United Way may be able help. Call their free informational and referral service by dialing 211 for more information.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

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