
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health Department Urges Caution as Excessive Heat Builds

GRAND RAPIDS – Meteorologists at the National Weather Service (NWS) in Grand Rapids are forecasting heat indexes that will exceed 100 degrees Friday, June 29 and Saturday, June 30. A heat index or “feels like” temperature considers levels of humidity that will make temperatures in the 90s feel much hotter. Heat indexes in the 100s can present serious and potentially deadly health risks.

“Because of the extreme humidity, temperatures will likely remain in the 80s overnight on Saturday,” says Nathan Jeruzal, Meteorologist at the NWS office in Grand Rapids. These warm and muggy nights add to the cumulative stress and possible health effects.

Children, the elderly, and pets are especially at risk of becoming ill in these temperatures. 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.

“People may have trouble adjusting to changes in temperature,” says Adam London, Administrative Health Officer with KCHD. “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. Drink non-alcoholic fluids often, and avoid alcohol or sugary-drinks, as they can cause you to dehydrate faster.

Wear light clothing that allows air circulation, limit outdoor activity and avoid spending time in direct sunlight.

The following symptoms may be a sign of heat stroke. Call 911 immediately if observed.

High body temperature (above 103),

Hot, red, dry or moist skin,

Rapid and strong pulse and / or a loss of consciousness,

Move the person to a cool environment and DO NOT GIVE FLUIDS. Heat Stroke is a medical emergency!

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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 265 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 three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.