

Advice for coping with hot temperatures

To the community,

With summer in full swing, El Dorado County health officials are encouraging residents to prepare now to stay cool and healthy over the next few months.

We are asking people to take steps to ensure their air conditioner is working properly and they have a plan in place to prevent summer heat injuries.

Each summer brings the potential for heat waves. Summer heat waves can be extremely dangerous and can cause serious medical problems, especially for people who are very young, elderly, or have chronic medical conditions.

It is more difficult for these individuals to regulate their body temperatures and to adjust to extreme changes in heat. During periods of extreme heat, electric fans do not sufficiently cool a person down, especially those who are most vulnerable to the heat. Staying in an air conditioned environment and using common sense measures will help prevent heat-related illness.

The El Dorado County Department of Human Services has programs to assist low-income individuals with summer heat planning. One program is available to make homes more energy efficient and to repair or replace air conditioners or evaporative coolers. Another program provides assistance once per year to pay for high energy costs, such as a high electric bill during a summer heat wave.

For more information on these programs, or to see if you qualify, contact DHS at (530) 621.6150.

The following are tips on how to stay cool and healthy during hot weather:

- * Drink plenty of fluids, such as water and low-calorie sports drinks, to replace salts and minerals lost through sweating.
- * Stay indoors in an air-conditioned building. If your home does not have sufficient air conditioning, visit a friend, relative or other location in the community, including libraries, grocery stores, or shopping centers where the air conditioning is working.
- * Pace yourself and avoid heavy exertion in the heat.
- * Never leave a child or an animal in a parked vehicle, even for a few minutes. Temperatures can quickly rise to dangerous levels in a matter of minutes.
- * Check on neighbors, relatives and friends, particularly those who may be isolated.

For more information and additional tips to stay cool and healthy during the summer, visit www.edcgov.us/publichealth.

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