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Extreme Heat and Human Health

New Jersey's Guide to Beating the Heat



This video provides information on the health impacts that extreme heat will have on the human body as well as helpful tips on how to stay safe on hot days.

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[Heat-related illness, injuries, and deaths](#) provides users with the following HRI and maximum daily temperature data views for New Jersey: Near real-time syndromic surveillance data (daily emergency department visits); the number of diagnosed HRI emergency department visits and hospitalizations from the previous year; and deaths from HRI since 2000. Daily Emergency Department syndromic surveillance data are summarized by age group, race/ethnicity, and sex for the most recent heatwave.

Symptoms Associated With Extreme Heat

Extreme heat, such as that experienced during heatwaves, is dangerous to human health as the body's systems for controlling body temperature can become ineffective by prolonged exposure to excessive heat. High temperatures can cause excessive sweating, leading to dehydration if an individual does not drink enough water to replenish the lost fluids. **Dehydration** can result in dizziness, weakness, confusion, **heat exhaustion**, and even heat stroke.

Heat exhaustion, a condition characterized by heavy sweating, rapid pulse, nausea, headache, and fatigue. It can can impair a person's ability to perform physical or cognitive tasks and can progress to heat stroke if not treated promptly.

Heat stroke is a severe and potentially life-threatening condition

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syncope (fainting).

Extreme Heat and Chronic and Pre-existing Conditions

Heatwaves act as a threat multiplier. High temperatures put

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such as asthma, as heat, combined with humidity can make it more difficult to breathe. Additionally, air pollution, particularly ground level ozone which forms in the presence of direct sunlight and heat tends to be more concentrated during heatwaves, exacerbating respiratory issues.

Related Health Impacts From Heat

High temperatures also heat up the built environment around us also heat up our build environment. The built environment is defined as human-made or modified surroundings that provide the setting for human activity (habitable buildings, parks, roads etc.). Exposure to super-heated car interiors, pavements, and outdoor metal infrastructure can accelerate the onset of, or exacerbate the effects of, heat-related illnesses or cause skin damage on contact.

Car Interiors:

The inside of parked cars can quickly become hot and dangerous during the summer months. Even on an 80° F day, the temperature inside of a car can reach 100° F in less than 10 minutes. It only takes two minutes for a car to reach a temperature that can cause serious health effects. As such, it's important to never leave a person (especially children) or pets in a parked car for any amount of time. To prevent that risk, always double check to make sure everyone, including children and

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[What is Extreme Heat?](#) [Chill Out NJ](#) [Extreme Heat and Vulnerable Populations](#) [Behavior](#)

... by ground equipment, sand, rocks, pavements, and asphalt can reach temperatures between 120° F and 150° F during the summer months. At those temperatures, direct skin contact for under a minute can lead to second degree burns. Children, individuals prone to falling, and pets are particularly at risk. To prevent contact burns, always make sure to wear footwear when walking on the beach or outdoor surfaces.

Children should wear light and breathable clothing to prevent skin exposure on hot surfaces at playgrounds. Often people forget that their pets' paws are similarly susceptible to contact burns during their daily walks. Whenever possible, try to walk your pet in shaded or grassy areas rather than on hot sidewalks. Consider pet shoes for paw protection when the temperatures rise.

Sources:

["Streets of Fire" revisited: contact burns](#)

Resources

Preventing Heat Related Illness Guide (New Jersey Department of Health)

Prevenir la insolación (New Jersey Department of Health)

NJ Climate Change Impacts on Human Health & Communities

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[What is Extreme Heat?](#) [Chill Out NJ](#) [Extreme Heat and Vulnerable Populations](#) [Behavior](#)

[Tips for Preventing Heat-Related Illness \(CDC\)](#)

[For Health Providers: : Preventing Heat-Related Illness and Death Among People Most at Risk during Excessive Heat Events \(NJDOH\)](#)

[Keep Your Cool in Hot Weather! \(CDC\)](#)

[Heat and Your Health: Clinical Guidance \(CDC\)](#)

[New Jersey Department of Health's Youth Camps: Health Center](#)

[New Jersey Department of Health's Guidance for Schools on hot and Humid Days](#)

[CHILL'D-Out: A Heat and Health Risk Factor Screening Questionnaire \(CDC\)](#)

[ASPCA's Hot Weather Safety Tips \(For Pets\)](#)

[Warm Weather Pet Safety \(AVMA\)](#)

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