



For Immediate Release:

July 8, 2008

Heat Alert: County Cooling Centers Available

Los Angeles County is expected to have hot temperatures this week

LOS ANGELES – Triple digit temperatures are forecasted for the mountains and valleys this week with temperatures in the 90s in the Los Angeles basin. Due to the hot weather, county cooling centers will be available this week for seniors or for those looking for a place to beat the heat.

The county cooling centers are open during normal business hours, Monday through Friday. Some county cooling centers are open over the weekends, including county libraries. A list of these centers, locations, and hours of operation, can be found at www.publichealth.lacounty.gov or people can call the county's information and referral line from any land or cell phone by dialing 2-1-1. Please call ahead of time to make sure a cooling center is open.

If a cooling center is not available during the evenings or over the weekend, people are encouraged to visit public facilities such as libraries, shopping malls, and parks.

“Prolonged exposure to the heat either in a home without air conditioning or outdoors may cause dehydration, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke,” said Dr. Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, County Health Officer and Public Health Director.

“Never leave children, elderly people, or pets unattended in closed vehicles, even with the windows ‘cracked’, since temperatures inside can quickly rise to life-threatening levels.”

If you plan to be outdoors, take precautions to protect yourself from the heat. Symptoms of dehydration and heat cramps include dizziness, fatigue, faintness, headaches, muscle cramps, and increased thirst. Individuals with these symptoms should be moved to a cooler, shaded place and given water or sport drinks. More severe symptoms such as diminished judgment, disorientation, pale and clammy skin, a rapid and weak pulse, and/or fast and shallow breathing may indicate heat exhaustion or impending heat stroke and requires immediate medical attention.

Several tips for beating the heat include:

- Wear light, loose-fitting clothing.
- Drink water or sports drinks often (do not wait until you are thirsty), and avoid drinking alcohol.
- Offer help to those in your neighborhood with limited access to air conditioning and transportation, such as seniors or those who are ill. Check on them frequently or take them to a location with air conditioning.

-MORE-



Public Health News

- Avoid unnecessary exertion, such as vigorous exercise during peak sun hours, if you are outside or in a non-air conditioned building.
- Stay out of the sun if you do not need to be in it. When in the sun, wear sunscreen, wear a hat, preferably with a wide brim, and loose-fitting clothing with long sleeves and pants.

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises more than 4,000 employees and an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do, please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>.

###