



CITY OF LAREDO

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

(Serving All of Webb County)

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News Release

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To: All Media Contacts
From: The City of Laredo Health Department
Thru: Hector Gonzalez, MD, M.P.H., Health Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stay Cool, Stay Hydrated, Stay Informed **(Drink Plenty Of Water and Don't Wait Until You Are Thirsty To Drink)**

Laredo, TX –The summer heat is here and we want to remind the public on heat prevention to prevent heat stress, heat stroke which can lead to serious health problems.

Persons most susceptible are the very young, older persons and those with underlying illnesses, student athletes, and person who work outside. In particular, persons over 65 years of age, infants and children up to age four, those who are overweight, those who overexert themselves during work or exercise, and people who are ill or on certain medications, need to take precautions.

Above all stay hydrated and take plenty of breaks if you are working or playing outdoors and **never leave children or pets alone in the car with no ventilation**. In the first 10 minutes temperature can rise 20 degrees and anyone especially children can suffer heat stroke, collapse and potentially be life threatening!

Heat stroke is a serious problem for children (high body temperature, red, hot skin and dry, headache, dizzy, nausea and confusion, unconsciousness).

“Among the most important precautions you can take is to keep yourself hydrated by drinking plenty of water even if you are not thirsty and staying in cool shaded areas,” said Dr. Hector F. Gonzalez, Director of Health for the City of Laredo Health Department. As a result we want to make sure that we remember the young and elderly in our homes and daycares, **and check on them**. Remember:

- NEVER leave anyone in a closed, parked vehicle even for a minute.
- Put stuffed animal in the car seat, when child is buckled in put the stuffed animal in the front with the driver as a reminder a child is in the car.
- When leaving the car check once more that all are out
- Limit vigorous activity during hot, humid weather.
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight and light-colored clothing.
- Drink more water than you need to satisfy your thirst. Limit drinks that can cause dehydration such as soda and coffee and avoid alcohol.
- Ask your doctor if any health condition or medication put you at risk for health illness
- Protect yourself from the sun (sunglasses, hat, umbrella and **sunscreen with a SPF of 15 or higher**).

- During hot periods of the day stay indoors and seek relief in shade, keep cool! Use an air conditioner or go to a cool place (community center, senior citizen center, library, shopping mall).
- Monitor high-risk people for signs of heat related illness. Visit older neighbors and family members at least twice a day to make sure they are safe.
- If you exercise in the heat, try to schedule vigorous exercise during the cooler morning or evening
- **Let's remember our Pets as well**, keep them in shade, cool and with plenty of water and **never** leave them alone in closed car or building without ventilation
- For athletes especially limit outdoor activity, especially during the middle of the day when the sun is hottest.
- Schedule workouts and practices earlier or later in the day when the temperature is cooler.
- Pace activity. Start activities slow and pick up the pace gradually.
- Drink more water than usual, and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink more. Muscle cramping may be an early sign of heat-related illness.
- Monitor a teammate's condition, and have someone do the same for you.
- Avoid alcohol or liquids containing large amounts of sugar.
- Wear and reapply sunscreen as indicated on the package.
- Wear a brimmed hat and loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Spend time in air-conditioned buildings during breaks and after work.
- Encourage co-workers to take breaks to cool off and drink water.

Watch for:

Heat illness (body loses the ability to regulate temperature with heavy sweating)

Symptoms vary, but can have red, flushed skin, rapid strong pulse, throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea, muscle cramps, dehydration, confusion and unconsciousness.

Heat stroke (person stops sweating and is dry) and Heat Exhaustion (profuse sweating, paleness and cramps); both can be a life-threatening --- CALL 911 immediately.

- Move the person to a shaded or air-conditioned area.
- Spray or sponge them with cool water (shower or immerse in a tub with cool water).
- Attempt to get the body temperature lowered to 101 to 102 degrees.
- Keep the person lying down (raise their feet) and continue to cool the body. Watch for breathing problems.
- If the victim refuses water, vomits, or if there are changes in consciousness, call 911.

If you would like more information about heat illness contact the City of Laredo Health Department at (956) 795-4951, the Fire Department at (956) 956-718-6000 the Police Department at (956) 795-2800 or your physician's office.