

# FactSheet

Para Su Información

## Extreme Heat is a Potential Health Concern

### Background Information

During the summertime, heat waves can bring unusually high temperatures (10 degrees or more above the average high temperature) that last for days or weeks. Extreme heat pushes your body beyond its normal limits. Under usual circumstances your internal thermostat sends signals to produce perspiration that evaporates and cools the body. However, extreme heat, especially when combined with high humidity, causes the evaporation process to slow and the body to work harder to maintain a normal temperature.

These conditions can overload your system and lead to heat-related illness and even death. In the summer of 1980, a severe heat wave hit the United States, and nearly 1,700 people died. Older people, children, and people with conditions such as obesity, heart disease and poor circulation are at greater risk of experiencing illnesses associated with extreme heat. People who work outdoors, exercise outside or use drugs or alcohol may become dehydrated and are also susceptible to heat-related illnesses.

### Additional Information

- Clark County's dry climate is beneficial as humid conditions intensify the health effects of extreme heat conditions.
- In a normal year, approximately 175 Americans die from extreme heat. Most at risk are young children, the elderly, and those who are sick or overweight. Between 1936 and 1975, nearly 20,000 people succumbed to the effects of heat and solar radiation.

- Because men sweat more than women, men are more susceptible to heat illness because they become dehydrated more quickly.
- People living in urban areas may be at a greater risk from the effects of a prolonged heat wave than people living in rural regions. Increased health problems can occur when stagnant atmospheric conditions trap pollutants in urban areas, thus adding contaminated air to excessive hot temperatures.

Self-help measures are not a substitute for medical care but may help you recognize and respond promptly to warning signs of trouble. Your best defense against heat-related illness is prevention. Staying cool and making simple changes in your fluid intake, activities, and clothing during hot weather can help you remain safe and healthy.



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