



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Avoid Heat-Related Illness as Temperatures Soar in San Luis Obispo County
*Residents Encouraged to Stay Cool, Stay Hydrated, and Stay Connected During Extreme Heat***

San Luis Obispo — As an extended heat wave with temperatures nearing 107 degrees approaches some inland areas of San Luis Obispo County, the Public Health Department encourages residents to protect themselves from heat-related illness and to check on those who may be especially at risk. This includes children, the elderly, people with health conditions, and people who work outdoors.

"Staying cool isn't just about comfort: heat-related illness can be very serious and even deadly," said Dr. Christy Mulkerin, Deputy Health Officer of the County of San Luis Obispo. "We need to take heat seriously and look out for each other."

Residents can reduce the risk of heat-related illness by staying cool, staying hydrated, and staying connected during extreme heat.

Stay cool:

- Stay in air-conditioned buildings as much as possible. If you do not have air conditioning at home, consider visiting air-conditioned public places like libraries or malls. Even a few hours of air conditioning can help your body cope. While fans can provide comfort, they are not effective at preventing heat-related illness when temperatures reach the high 90s or above.
- Avoid exercising or working outdoors during the hottest times of day. Take advantage of cooler early morning and later evening hours. If you must exercise or work outdoors in the heat, pace yourself and take frequent breaks.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. Outdoors, wear a wide-brimmed hat.
- Take cool showers or baths. Keep a spray bottle of water in the refrigerator to spray yourself with cool water if needed.

Stay hydrated:

- Drink more water than usual. Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink more water.
- Avoid alcohol and beverages containing high amounts of sugar.
- If you are working or exercising outside, drink two to four cups of water every hour.

Stay connected:

- Check on neighbors, family, and friends who are especially at risk. This includes children, the elderly, people with health conditions (including mental health conditions), people who work outdoors, and people who do not have access to air conditioning. If you are at risk, ask someone to check on you.

County of San Luis Obispo Health Agency

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- Remember to check on pets. Pets can get dehydrated quickly, so give them plenty of fresh, clean water when it's hot or humid. Make sure they have a shady place to get out of the sun, be careful not to over-exercise them, and keep them indoors when it's extremely hot.
- If you must work or exercise outdoors in the heat, use a buddy system. Monitor your buddy for signs of heat-related illness (see below), and ask them to do the same for you. If you see signs of illness, stop work or exercise and move to a cooler environment.
- Never leave people or pets in closed, parked cars.
- If you see signs of heat-related illness, take action immediately.

When the body becomes too hot and is not able to cool itself, risk increases for heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

- **Heat exhaustion** symptoms include heavy sweating; weakness; cold, pale, and clammy skin; fast, weak pulse; nausea or vomiting; and fainting.
- **Heat stroke** symptoms include high body temperature (above 103°F); hot, red, dry or moist skin; rapid and strong pulse; confusion and possible unconsciousness.

If you see signs of either illness, immediately move the person to a cooler area where they can lie down and rest, and cool the person with a cool (not cold) shower, bath, or wet cloth.

In the case of heat stroke, remember: heat stroke is a medical emergency. Call 911 immediately or ask someone to call 911 while you focus on helping the person cool down. A person suffering from heat stroke should not drink liquids.

In the case of heat exhaustion, the person may sip cool water. If the person vomits repeatedly, seek medical attention. Most people recover from heat exhaustion without medical attention.

More information about heat-related illness is available at:
<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/faq.html>

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