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TAKE CARE IN HOT & COLD WEATHER



PREVENTING HYPERTHERMIA AND HYPOTHERMIA



When it's Too Hot!

Beating the heat is as much a part of summer as baseball and hot dogs. City residents are particularly vulnerable to hot weather hazards. Asphalt, concrete, and tall buildings trap heat and, when combined with stagnant air and pollutants, increase the risk of heat-related illnesses or death, especially for people with respiratory problems.

What is Hyperthermia?


Hyperthermia is the name used for a variety of heat-related illnesses. Our bodies stay cool by sweating. Extreme heat and humidity can slow down, or even prevent sweating, so our body doesn't release heat and our temperature rises rapidly.

What to Look For, What to Do!

■ **Heat exhaustion** occurs from strenuously exercising or working in hot, humid conditions. Signs include heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness; headache, a fast and weak pulse, fast and shallow breathing, and nausea or vomiting. If left untreated, heat exhaustion may progress to the more dangerous heat stroke.

To treat heat exhaustion, move the person to a cool place, loosen clothing, apply cool, wet cloths to the neck, face, and arms, and give cool, nonalcoholic beverages. If symptoms worsen or last more than an hour, seek medical attention.

■ **Heat stroke** is a life-threatening condition that occurs when the body is unable to regulate its temperature. In just 10 to 15 minutes, the body's temperature may



rise to 106° F or higher. If not treated immediately, brain damage and death may follow. Symptoms include vomiting; confusion; unconsciousness; red, hot and dry skin; a body temperature of more than 103° F; nausea; and a throbbing headache.

If someone shows signs of heat stroke, immediately call 911. Then begin cooling the person as quickly as possible — move them to a cool place; spray or sponge them with cool water; or give them a cool shower. Do not give them anything to drink. Watch for breathing problems and make sure the airway is clear.

- **Heat cramps** are a painful tightening of stomach, arm, or leg muscles. Your body temperature and pulse usually stay normal, but your skin may feel moist and cool. Treat heat cramps by drinking fluids that don't contain alcohol or caffeine.

Who is at High-Risk for Heat-Related Problems?


- People 65 years of age or older
- Infants and children up to age four
- People with pre-existing medical conditions

During a heat wave, check on family, friends, and neighbors who do not have air-conditioning or who spend much of their time alone.

Tips to Help You Keep Cool

The following tips will help you prevent heat-related illnesses:

- Use the air conditioner if you have one. Set the thermostat no lower than 78 degrees.

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- If you don't have an air conditioner, go to a store, mall, library, movie theater, or cooling center.
 - Be sure window air conditioners fit snugly.
 - Drink plenty of water even if you aren't thirsty. Avoid caffeinated, high-sugar, and alcoholic beverages.
 - Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
 - Stay out of the sun. If you go out, wear sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or more.
 - Avoid strenuous activity between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.
 - If you work outdoors, take frequent breaks in a cool place.
 - Never leave children or pets in a parked car.
 - Eat smaller, lighter meals. Don't use your stove or oven.
 - Ask your doctor if your medications increase the risk of hyperthermia.




When it's Too Cold!

Bitter temperatures, wind, snow, and ice combine to create such seasonal health hazards as strained backs, broken bones, sprains, and colds. Extreme cold also increases your risk for hypothermia.

What is Hypothermia?

Hypothermia occurs when your body's temperature drops to a dangerous level from prolonged exposure to the cold.



Your body loses heat faster than it can be produced. Hypothermia affects your ability to think clearly and move, so you may not even know what is happening. Even a few degrees below 98.6° F can be devastating, as hypothermia causes an irregular heartbeat leading to heart problems and death.

The people most at risk for developing hypothermia are seniors, infants and children, and anyone who remains outdoors for long periods of time.

What to Look For, What to Do!

In adults, the warning signs of hypothermia include shivering, drowsiness, exhaustion, confusion or memory loss, fumbling hands, and slurred speech. Babies may develop bright red, cold skin and have little energy.

If you think someone may have hypothermia, take their temperature. If it is below 95° F, immediately get medical attention. Then move the person to where it is warm and remove wet clothing. If possible, wrap the person in a dry blanket, towel, sheet, or clothing.

Tips for Staying Warm When it's Cold

The following tips will help you prevent hypothermia:

- Dress in layers, but don't overdress.
- Wear a hat, waterproof, insulated boots, and mittens instead of gloves.
- Remove wet clothes immediately.
- Don't stand or sit too long in one place.
- Sit on a blanket or cushion, not on cold pavement or concrete.

- Drink plenty of fluids, but avoid caffeinated and alcoholic beverages.
- Avoid overexertion. If you sweat, remove outer layers of clothing or open your coat.
- Ask your doctor if any of your medications can increase the risk of hypothermia.

Cooling and Warming Centers

When it's dangerously hot or cold, New York City residents can call 311. Westchester residents can visit www.westchestergov.com or call 211, the information line for the United Way of Westchester and Putnam.



Staying Warm Begins at Home

Staying indoors may not prevent hypothermia, especially if the building is poorly insulated or the thermostat is set too low. A safe and energy-efficient thermostat setting is 68° F during the day, and 60° F at night. Set thermostats higher in homes with infants and the elderly.

A number of programs are available to help New Yorkers make their homes more energy-efficient. EmPower New York offers income-eligible customers no-cost services to help them use energy more efficiently. To learn more, call us at 1-866-729-7890. Contact the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority at getenergysmart.org to learn about others programs.



Extreme Temperatures, Higher Energy Bills

Sweltering heat and bitter cold inevitably lead to increased energy use — and higher bills. If you have trouble paying your home energy bill, we offer:

■ **Payment Extensions and Agreements —**

We can grant a payment extension or work with you on a payment agreement. Call 1-800-75-CONED (1-800-752-6633).

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You may also qualify for:

■ **Home Energy Assistance Program —**

In New York City call 1-800-692-0557 or 1-877-472-8411. In Westchester call 1-914-995-5619.

■ **Emergency Assistance Grants —**

If your service is scheduled to be, or has been, turned off, call New York City's Human Resources Info Line, 1-877-472-8411 and press menu option 6. Westchester residents should call the Department of Social Services, 1-914-995-5000.

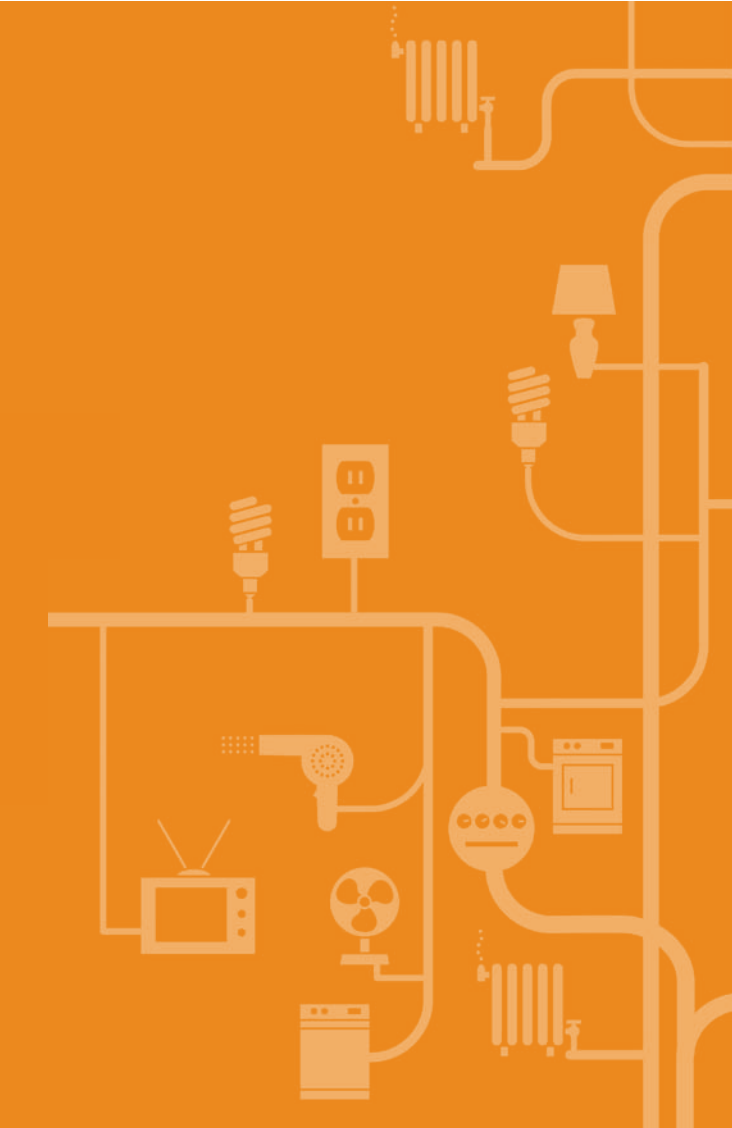
■ **Ongoing Assistance —** New York City

residents should call 1-877-472-8411. Westchester residents should call 914-995-5000. If you are age 62 or older, blind, or disabled call 1-800-772-1213 to find out if you are eligible for Social Security Income.



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