



## ILL EFFECTS OF EXCESSIVE HEAT

Los Angeles is expected to experience hot weather through July and August 2005.

The best ways to be protected from the ill effects of excessive heat are to dress appropriately; stay indoors, refrain from strenuous work or exercise during the hottest part of the day and stay hydrated.

Heat can kill by pushing the human body beyond its limits. Under normal conditions, the body's internal thermostat produces perspiration that evaporates and cools the body. However, in excessive heat and high humidity, evaporation is slowed and the body must work extra hard to maintain a normal temperature.

The effects of heat can quickly overcome the healthiest people, especially if they perform strenuous work during the warmest parts of the day. Symptoms of dehydration and heat illness may not be easily recognized.

Elderly people, young children, those who are sick, live alone or are overweight are more likely to become victims of excessive heat. Because men sweat more than women do, they become more quickly dehydrated and are more susceptible to heat illness. Those under a Doctor's care or taking medication should speak with their Physician about their vulnerability to heat illness.

Pets, horses, and livestock are also susceptible to difficulties from excessive heat. Animals do not perspire and rely on panting, wetting down, shade, cool earth, and drinking water for cooling. Animals cannot explain their needs, so it is up to people to take extra care that during heat waves, their needs are met.

During periods of excessive heat, the Los Angeles Fire Department recommends that you assess your daily activities and discuss heat safety precautions with family, neighbors and co-workers.

If your home does not have air conditioning, choose other places you could go to get away from the heat during the warmest part of the day. Schools, libraries, theaters, and other community facilities often provide air-conditioned refuge on the hottest days.

Local officials have designated many cooling centers in the Greater Los Angeles area, especially for seniors and those at greatest risk to heat illness.

Los Angeles Firefighters remind everyone to:

1. Learn the risks
2. Prepare members of your household, pets and your workplace
3. Plan to get relief from and avoid the effects of heat



You should plan in advance to wear lightweight, light-colored clothing that covers as much of your skin as possible as well as a well-ventilated hat with a wide brim. Light colors will reflect away the sun's rays more than dark colors, which absorb the sun's rays. Stay in the shade as much as possible and remain well hydrated.

When at work or on the road...

Never leave children or pets alone in a vehicle for even a brief moment. Temperatures inside a closed vehicle can reach more than 1400 F within minutes. Exposure to such high temperatures can kill in minutes. Even on days that feel pleasantly warm outside, temperatures in a parked vehicle can raise high enough to kill children and pets. Leaving a window open will not necessarily abate the danger.

Slow down. Avoid strenuous activity. Reduce, eliminate, or reschedule strenuous activities for a cooler part of the day. High-risk individuals should stay in cool places. Get plenty of rest to allow your natural "cooling system" to work. If you must do strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the early morning. Many heat emergencies are experienced by people exercising or working alone during the hottest part of the day. Use a buddy system.

Eat small meals and eat more often, and drink plenty of fluids even if you do not feel thirsty. Drink regularly and often. Your body needs water to keep cool. Water is the safest liquid to drink during heat emergencies. Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine. They make the heat's effects on your body worse.

Your neighborhood Firefighters will be keeping a close eye on local weather trends. You can help them by remaining cognizant of the dangers associated with hot weather, and keeping your home, family, neighborhood and workplace safe until cooler weather prevails.

For further information, consult the following web sites:

- ➔ [www.lafd.org/heat.htm](http://www.lafd.org/heat.htm)
- ➔ [www.edis.ca.gov/bulletins/](http://www.edis.ca.gov/bulletins/)
- ➔ [www.lafd.org/firewx.htm](http://www.lafd.org/firewx.htm)
- ➔ [www.wrh.noaa.gov/lox](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/lox)