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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Department of Health urges residents to stay safe from extreme heat

Learn what to do to avoid heat related illness

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) encourages all people in New Mexico to avoid heat-related illness by staying in cool indoor places and hydrating. Tuesday, May 17th and Thursday, May 19th are expected to bring record heat to portions of the state.

Temperatures will reach the upper 90s in some areas of east central to southeastern New Mexico including Albuquerque, Clayton, Clovis, Fort Sumner, Santa Rosa, Socorro, Tucumcari, and Portales. Roswell will also be expected to reach near 100° F.

“Acclimatization, adequate hydration, and avoidance of activities during extreme heat are the most effective measures to reduce the incidence of heat-related illnesses,” said David R. Scrase, M.D. acting cabinet secretary for the New Mexico Department of the Health. “People at highest risk of heat-related illness are the elderly, the very young and people with existing chronic diseases, but it can also just as easily affect anyone working or playing outdoors, if they are unprepared for the temperatures outside.”

It is important to know the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness because conditions can get serious, even deadly, very quickly if not recognized. Here is what to look for:

- Heat cramps muscle pain or spasms accompanied by heavy sweating, especially during intense exercise.
 - **What to do:** Stop any physical activity and get to a cool place. Drink water or a sports drink and wait for the cramps to go away before starting activity again. Get medical help right away if the cramps last longer than one hour, if you are on a low-sodium diet, or if you have heart problems.
- Heat exhaustion appears with heavy sweating, cold, clammy skin, a fast, weak pulse, nausea or vomiting, muscle cramps, tiredness or weakness, dizziness, headache, and fainting.
 - **What to do:** move to a cool place, loosen clothing, cool down with damp cloths or take a cool bath and sip water. If you are

throwing up, have symptoms last longer than an hour, or worsen get medical help right away.

- Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness and happens when the body loses its ability to sweat. Body temperature will climb (103 degrees or higher), skin will be hot, red, and dry or damp. Pulse will be fast and strong and can be accompanied by a headache, nausea, dizziness, confusion and passing out. It is important to recognize heat stroke in others, as they may not realize the danger that they are in because of confusion.
 - **What to do:** heat stroke is a medical emergency, so call 911 right away. Try to lower the person's body temperature with cool wet cloths or a cool bath. Do not give them anything to drink.

Employers should implement occupational health plans that allow employees to adapt behaviors to high temperatures such as slowing the pace of work during the heat of the day, provide water, and provide shaded areas for resting.

Likewise, athletic coaches should take precautions to protect athletes, especially young athletes whose bodies are still developing from getting heat-related illness. Further, DOH urges New Mexicans to never leave children, pets, or anyone in a parked car, even for a few minutes.

To find out more about heat-related illnesses visit <https://nmtracking.doh.nm.gov> for helpful tips on how to stay safe and cool this summer.

NMDOH

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