

# Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

201 W. Preston Street. Baltimore, Maryland 21201  
Martin O'Malley, Governor - Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor - Joshua M.  
Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

DHMH Office of Communications  
Karen Black, 410-767-6491

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### **Heat wave claims first victims of the year Precautions urged as temperatures expected to continue this week**

BALTIMORE, MD (July 2, 2012) - The recent heat wave has contributed to the first 2012 heat-related deaths in Maryland, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) has announced. One Montgomery County male adult (between the ages of 18-65) and one Wicomico County male senior (65 years or older) have died during this current heat wave. High temperatures are expected to continue this week.

DHMH cautions Maryland citizens that *heatstroke* and *heat exhaustion* can develop from the hot and humid conditions typically associated with Maryland summers.

"Extreme heat can be deadly and everyone should know the warning signs of danger," said DHMH Deputy Secretary Frances Phillips. "With the extreme heat and the lack of power throughout many areas of the state, people need to take advantage of cooling centers."

Marylanders in need of a [cooling center](#) or assistance can contact their Local Health Department for information by phone or the internet or go to the DHMH Cooling Center link at [www.dhmh.maryland.gov](http://www.dhmh.maryland.gov). For tips and reports on heat, click on [Extreme Heat](#) under Hot Topics at [www.dhmh.maryland.gov](http://www.dhmh.maryland.gov).

**Heatstroke** is a serious illness characterized by a body temperature greater than 105 degrees. Symptoms may include dry red skin, convulsions, disorientation, delirium and coma. Onset of heatstroke can be rapid: a person can go from feeling apparently well to a seriously ill condition within minutes. Treatment of heatstroke involves the rapid lowering of body temperature, using a cool bath or wet towels. A heatstroke

victim should be kept in a cool area; emergency medical care should be obtained by dialing 911.

**Heat exhaustion** is a milder form of heatstroke that may develop due to a combination of several days with high temperatures and dehydration in an individual. Signs of heat exhaustion include extreme weakness, muscle cramps, nausea, or headache. Victims may also vomit or faint. Heat exhaustion is treated with plenty of liquids and rest in a cool, shaded area. Those on a low-sodium diet or with other health problems should contact a doctor.

**Hot weather tips:**

- Drink plenty of fluids such as water and fruit juices to prevent dehydration -- be aware that alcohol can impair the body's sweat mechanism, as can fairly common medications such as antihistamines and diuretics;
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothes;
- Avoid direct sunlight by staying in the shade or by wearing sunscreen, a hat and sunglasses;
- When possible, stay in air-conditioned areas. If your home is not air-conditioned, consider a visit to a shopping mall or public library. Contact your local health department to see if there are cooling shelters open in your area;
- NEVER leave pets or young children in a car, even with the windows cracked;
- Check on elderly relatives or neighbors at least daily; and
- Take it easy when outdoors. Athletes and those who work outdoors should take short breaks when feeling fatigued. Schedule physical activity during the morning or evening when it is cooler.

In 2011, there were 34 confirmed heat-related deaths, in 2010, there were 32; in 2009, six heat related deaths; in 2008, 17; and in 2007, 21.

DHMH is making available brochure on protecting yourself in the heat at <http://dhmh.maryland.gov/extremeheat/Documents/AttachmentC-HeatEmergencyBrochure.pdf>

Information in Spanish is also available at [http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/factsheets/itdhpfehe/itdhpfehe\\_spanish\\_100-F-08-076.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/factsheets/itdhpfehe/itdhpfehe_spanish_100-F-08-076.pdf)

For more information visit (Including Spanish language websites):

- Maryland Emergency Management Agency:  
[http://www.mema.state.md.us/MEMA/content\\_page.jsp?TOPICID=othernd  
s](http://www.mema.state.md.us/MEMA/content_page.jsp?TOPICID=othernd<br/>s)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency:  
<http://www.fema.gov/hazard/heat/index.shtm>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:  
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/>
  - o CDC Spanish Translation:  
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/es/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/>
- Additional Spanish Language Resources:  
[http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/factsheets/itdhpfefe/itdhpfefe\\_spanish  
\\_100-F-08-076.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/factsheets/itdhpfefe/itdhpfefe_spanish<br/>_100-F-08-076.pdf)  
[http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/posters/beat-the-  
heat\\_poster\\_spanish\\_100-H-07-002.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/posters/beat-the-<br/>heat_poster_spanish_100-H-07-002.pdf)

###

*Stay connected:* [www.twitter.com/MarylandDHMH](http://www.twitter.com/MarylandDHMH) or [www.facebook.com/MarylandDHMH](http://www.facebook.com/MarylandDHMH)

###

*Stay connected:* [www.twitter.com/MarylandDHMH](http://www.twitter.com/MarylandDHMH) or [www.facebook.com/MarylandDHMH](http://www.facebook.com/MarylandDHMH)