

GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact: Catherine Cioffi
Communications Director**

Office - (914) 995-2932

Cell- (914) 954 -5579

CCioffi@westchestergov.com

Caren Halbfinger

Office – (914) 813-5013

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LATIMER AND WESTCHESTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ISSUE HOT WEATHER REMINDER

Advises Residents to Drink Water, Cool off and Never Leave People or Pets in a Closed Car

(White Plains, NY) – Following a hot and humid weekend where temperatures cracked the 90-degree mark in the Westchester County, and with temperatures expected to reach the mid to upper 80s for the next two days, the Westchester County Health Department is issuing a hot weather reminder. Temperatures have not been high long enough to warrant a heat advisory, but the constant heat and humidity can still take a toll. Residents should avoid strenuous outdoor activity, drink lots of water, avoid alcohol and caffeine, avoid the mid-day sun and take precautions to prevent heat-related illness.

Westchester County Executive George Latimer said: “Make sure to pace yourself – don’t overdo it in the heat. If you have to spend a lot of time outdoors, take breaks in an air-conditioned place and drink lots of water. And during a heat wave, remember to always check in on your elderly or ailing neighbors.”

Sherlita Amler, MD, Westchester County Commissioner of Health, said people who are most vulnerable to adverse effects from the heat include the very young, seniors, people who are obese and those with high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes or lung conditions.

“Heat stroke and dehydration can take you by surprise,” Amler said. “High humidity, chronic health conditions and some medications can also increase a person’s risk for heat stroke. Be sure to drink lots of water and take it easy.”

Heat stroke is a serious and life-threatening condition that claims many lives nationwide each year. Symptoms include hot red, dry skin, shallow breathing, a rapid, weak pulse and confusion. Anyone suffering from heat stroke needs to receive emergency medical treatment immediately. Call 911 if you suspect heat stroke and immediately cool the overheated person while waiting for emergency help to arrive.

Amler reminded residents never to leave children, pets or people in a car. Temperatures can quickly rise to unsafe levels, so motorists should always look before they lock their vehicles.

“To avoid tragedy, it’s also vital to never leave infants, children, seniors or pets in a closed car no matter how brief the time,” Amler continued. “Closed vehicles can quickly heat up to a life-threatening 140° F or more.”

Another concern during a heat wave is heat exhaustion. Seniors, young children, people who are overweight or who have high blood pressure, people who work outside or in other hot environments are most at risk. Frequent breaks and drinking lots of water can help prevent heat exhaustion. Signs include headache, nausea or vomiting, dizziness and exhaustion, as well as cool, moist, pale or flushed skin. Anyone suffering from heat exhaustion should move out of the sun and apply cool, wet cloths to their skin.

“During a heat wave, seniors, young children and people with compromised immunity especially should avoid vigorous outdoor activity, seek the shade, spend time in air-conditioned locations and drink lots of water throughout the day,” Amler said. “Especially when they’re swimming and playing in the water, children often forget to drink, so parents and caregivers should prompt children to take breaks to hydrate.”

Those who plan to travel by car should prepare their vehicle before hitting the road. Always travel with a spare battery, and avoid leaving radios, phone chargers and other accessories running when the engine is not. Check to make sure your air conditioning is properly functioning and coolant is at the proper level. If you plan to travel in less populated areas, bring water and an umbrella for shade if it becomes necessary to leave the car. Always keep air flowing throughout the vehicle, and try to park in the shade.

For tips to prevent heat-related illness and places to stay cool, residents can visit the Health Department website at www.westchestergov.com/health.

Residents who need a place to cool off can go to an indoor mall. Libraries and community centers often serve as cooling centers, but call before you go.

Elevated heat and humidity can also lead to unhealthy levels of ozone, a gas produced by the action of sunlight on organic air contaminants from auto exhaust and other sources. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation forecasts daily ozone conditions at (<http://www.dec.ny.gov>), or call the New York State Air Quality Hotline at 1-800-535-1345.

The County’s Department of Emergency Services is monitoring the weather forecast, tracking the opening of local Cooling Centers and is in contact with Con Edison and NYSEG concerning the potential for power outages.

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