

GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WESTCHESTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ISSUES HEAT ADVISORY
Advises Residents to Drink Water, Cool off and Never Leave People or Pets in a Closed Car

(White Plains, NY) – With high humidity and temperatures forecasted to exceed 95 degrees in the County today and Friday through Sunday, the Westchester County Health Department is issuing a heat advisory. As humidity and temperatures rise, residents should avoid strenuous activity, drink lots of water, avoid alcohol and caffeine, and take precautions to prevent heat-related illness.

“Pace yourself -- don’t overdo it in the heat,” said County Executive George Latimer. “If you 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.”

Latimer went with the Visiting Nurse Service (VNS) Westchester to check in on Karen Tutnauer at her home in White Plains.

“Heat-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke, are of special concern among our elderly patients,” said Timothy P. Leddy, President and CEO of VNS Westchester. “Older adults are more likely to have chronic health conditions that alter the body’s ability to properly regulate body temperature in the wake of excessive heat. Prescription medications can also affect temperature control. At this time of year, VNSW’s home care team plays a key role in ensuring that our elderly patients are not exhibiting signs of dehydration or other symptoms of heat stress, and that they have sufficient cooling systems in the home.”

“Be sure to check with your local senior center for the nearest cooling center if you’re a senior dealing with extreme heat,” said Mae Carpenter, Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services. “Make sure to stay hydrated, and limit your physical activity.”

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.

“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 said. “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 and those who work in hot environments are most at risk. 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 seek shade when parked.

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 should check with their municipality for the latest availability, hours and locations of cooling centers, and with the facilities themselves. A list of libraries and community centers that serve as cooling centers is available at <https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/weather/cooling/countycenters.htm#westchester>.

The Village of Croton-on-Hudson has opened the Community Room at the Stanley H. Kellerhouse Municipal Building as a cooling center. It will be unstaffed and will remain open 24/7 until the heat wave breaks.

The Croton Free Library, located at 171 Cleveland Drive, is also available during their normal business hours. Please check <http://www.crotonfreelibrary.org> for current hours.

The Town of Cortlandt will open the Muriel H. Morabito Community Center at 29 Westbrook Drive Wednesday, July 17, 2019 through Friday, July 19, 2019 from 8:30 am - 6:00 pm.

Upon request to the Pelham Police Department, the Pelham Town House, 20 Fifth Avenue, Pelham NY 10803 will be open. Call (914) 738-2000.

- For Mount Vernon, go to www.cmvny.com
- For New Rochelle, go to www.newrochelleny.com
- For Port Chester, go to www.portchesterny.com
- For Peekskill, go to www.cityofpeekskill.com
- For Rye Town, go to www.townofrye.com
- For Yonkers, go to www.yonkersny.gov/keepcool
- For Ossining Village, go to www.villageofossining.org

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. If you see fallen power lines or damaged electrical equipment, Dial 911. Do not touch a downed line or anyone in contact with the line. Always assume a downed line is live. To report an electrical outage call Con Edison at 1-800-75-CONED (1-800-752-6633) or NYSEG at 1-800-572-1131. Whether you're a contractor or a homeowner doing an outdoor project, having underground utilities marked is essential to protect yourself and others from injury and prevent damage to underground utility lines, which is especially important during periods of extreme heat and high demand for electricity. Visit <https://www.digsafelynewyork.com/> or Call Dig Safely New York at 811 (1-800-962-7962) for more information.

About Westchester County

Westchester County, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just under a million. Originally home to Native Americans, who were members of the Lenape tribe, it is today a rich mix of many cultures and landscapes. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester is made up of 6 cities, 19 towns and 20 villages. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Using inclusion and openness as a foreground, Latimer is fighting to make Westchester a destination for all people to live, work and enjoy. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting www.westchestergov.com

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