

Communications Office

Peterborough County-City Health Unit
10 Hospital Drive
Peterborough, ON K9J 8M1
(705) 743-1000, ext. 391
www.pcchu.ca



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health Unit Advises Precautions for Extreme Heat

Tuesday, May 25, 2010, Peterborough

The Peterborough County-City Health Unit is advising local residents that special care needs to be taken on days when the temperature is extreme.

A heat alert is issued when the combination of high heat, high humidity and other weather conditions can be hazardous to your health. In south-eastern Ontario, a warm day often translates into a smog day. The combination of high heat and poor air quality can be dangerous to your health.

Environment Canada is predicting that the current high pressure will continue to dominate for the next few days and some relief from the heat won't come until Friday.

Are you at risk?

Those especially at risk during extreme heat conditions include:

- older adults (over age 65)
- infants and young children
- outdoor workers
- People who exercise vigorously or are involved in strenuous outdoor work for prolonged periods
- people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart and respiratory conditions
- People taking certain medications, for example, for mental health conditions
- Homeless or marginally-housed persons

People suffer from heat related illness when their bodies are unable to cool themselves properly. In these cases, a person's body temperature rises quickly. Very high body temperatures can damage the brain or other vital organs. When it is extremely hot, and you are feeling the effects of the heat, it is important to spend even a few hours in a cooler environment to cool the core body temperature down.

How to avoid heat-related illness:

- Drink lots of water and natural fruit juices even if you don't feel very thirsty. Avoid alcoholic beverages, coffee and cola.
- Avoid going out in the blazing sun or heat when possible. If you must go outside, stay in the shade as much as possible and plan to go out early in the morning or evening when it is cooler and smog levels may not be as high as in the afternoon. Wear a hat.

NEWS RELEASE

Communications Office

Peterborough County-City Health Unit
10 Hospital Drive
Peterborough, ON K9J 8M1
(705) 743-1000, ext. 391
www.pcchu.ca



- Go to air conditioned or cool places such as shopping malls, libraries, community centres or a friend's place.
- If you don't have air conditioning, keep shades or drapes drawn and blinds closed on the sunny side of your home, but keep windows slightly open.
- Wear loose fitting, light clothing.
- Keep lights off or turned down low.
- Take a cool bath or shower periodically or cool down with cool, wet towels.
- Avoid heavy meals and using your oven.
- Avoid intense or moderately intense physical activity.
- Never leave a child in a parked car or asleep in direct sunlight.
- Fans alone may not provide enough cooling when the temperature is high.
- Consult your doctor or pharmacist regarding the side effects of your medications.

There are many child-friendly areas in Peterborough that you can go to in extreme heat conditions including shopping malls, the library, wading pools, and the splash pad at the zoo.

Tips for using fans

- use fan in or next to a window
- use fan to bring in cooler air from the outside

Fans don't cool air; they just move the air around. Fans keep you cool by evaporating your sweat. Don't use a fan to blow extremely hot air on yourself as this can cause heat exhaustion to happen faster.

-30-

For further information, please contact:

Sami El-Hajjeh
Public Health Inspector
(705) 743-1000, ext. 383