

# Hyperthermia Alerts; High Temperatures Unsafe for Young Children, Vulnerable Adults and Animals

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Whenever the National Weather Service forecasts temperatures and/or heat indices over 95 degrees, the County's Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security will issue a Hyperthermia Alert. During those times, County officials urge residents to take precautions to protect themselves, and their pets, against heat-related illnesses such as heat stroke and heat exhaustion.

Residents are also asked to check on elderly friends, relatives and neighbors who may be isolated, to ensure they are not showing signs of heat-related illnesses.

Open County facilities, including libraries, swimming pools, recreation and senior centers, as well as regional services centers, are good locations to find respite from the heat.

Young children, the elderly and pets should never be left in parked vehicles during hot weather.

The Montgomery County Police Animal Services Division staff reminds community members to be especially careful with all pets during times of increased heat. Animals that are outdoors must have access to shade, shelter, and plenty of fresh water.

The following precautions will help residents remain safe and more comfortable during excessive heat days:

- **Stay indoors, whenever possible.** Visit nearby air conditioned buildings in your community, if your home is not air-conditioned. In addition to County facilities, residents can visit shopping malls, movie theaters and museums. A hyperthermia plan for homeless shelters has been activated and Progress Place in downtown Silver Spring is open from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. for all homeless individuals.
- **Be careful to avoid strenuous activities that can result in overexposure to the sun, such as sports and gardening.** If you must do a strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning before 9 a.m.

- **Drink plenty of water.** Dehydration, cramps, exhaustion or heat stroke can result from not drinking enough fluids. Water is the safest liquid to drink.
- **Avoid drinks containing alcohol or caffeine.**
- **When outdoors, wear proper protection from the sun. Light-colored clothing, a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen protection are strongly recommended.**
- **Never leave pets, young children, or the elderly in a vehicle** for ANY amount of time, even with the window open, because the temperature inside parked cars can reach 130 degrees in only a few minutes.
- **Monitor those at high risk.** Those at greatest risk of heat-related illness include:
  - Infants and children up to four years of age;
  - Individuals 65 years of age and older;
  - Individuals who are ill or on certain medications; and
  - Individuals who are overweight.

Knowing the signs of heat exposure can prevent serious illness from becoming life threatening. Should any of the following occur, get out of the heat, loosen any tight or heavy clothing, and drink plenty of water:

- **Heat cramps:** symptoms include painful muscle spasms, usually involving the abdominal muscles or legs;
- **Heat exhaustion:** first signs are cool, moist, pale or flushed skin, dizziness, nausea, headache and weakness; and
- **Heat stroke:** the most serious sign of overexposure. Symptoms include red, hot, dry skin, weak pulse, rapid breathing and changes in consciousness. Seek medical attention by calling 9-1-1.
- **Pet Safety:** The Director of the Montgomery County Police Animal Services Division, Thomas Koenig, will be enforcing Executive Regulation 17-17, Anti-Cruelty Conditions for Dogs, Section D, which states, "A person must not tether a dog under circumstances that endanger its health, safety, or well-being, including: unattended tethering of a dog during a weather emergency." The penalty for this violation is a fine of \$500. This regulation will be enforced whenever forecast temperatures could endanger the well-being of dogs. Also in Executive Regulation 17-17, Owners are advised not to leave pets unattended outdoors during Hyperthermia Alerts.
- The Montgomery County Police Animal Services Division wants to remind community members to be especially careful with all pets during times of increased heat. Animals that are outdoors must have access to shade, shelter,

and plenty of fresh water. When possible, it is advised to bring typically outdoor pets inside during periods of extreme heat.

For general information about County programs and services, call 3-1-1. Sign up for the County's Alert Montgomery notification system at [alert.montgomerycountymd.gov](https://alert.montgomerycountymd.gov) to receive emergency alerts regarding weather and other emergency information.

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