

# Homeland Security & Emergency Management Agency Johnson County, Iowa.



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## Media Release

Topic: Heat Emergency Preparedness & Outdoor Events

The National Weather Service in the Quad Cities has issued an Excessive Heat Warning for Iowa. Record highs around 100 degrees are expected today and tomorrow, and will likely continue into the weekend. Heat indexes will be soaring to 110 degrees in the afternoon and evening. The excessive heat is expected to continue through the weekend. The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) reminds Iowans even young and healthy individuals can have a heat-related illness if they are active during hot weather.

“People suffer heat-related illness when the body’s temperature control system is overloaded. The body normally cools itself by sweating. But under some conditions, sweating just isn’t enough,” said IPDH Medical Director, Dr. Patricia Quinlisk. “In such cases, a person’s body temperature rises rapidly. Especially when the humidity is high, sweat will not evaporate as quickly, preventing the body from releasing heat quickly.”

Although anyone at any time can suffer from heat-related illness, the people are at greatest risk include:

- People age 65 or older
- Infants and young children
- Overweight individuals
- People who are performing manual labor or exercise outdoors
- People who have chronic medical conditions, especially those with heart disease or high blood pressure, or who take certain medications, such as those for hypertension, depression, insomnia, or cardiovascular illness.
- People who are consuming excessive amounts of alcohol or are consuming large amounts of caffeine or energy drinks

As a special word of caution for those attending outdoor sporting events over the upcoming weekend, officials remind everyone to wear light colored clothes that breath well, apply plenty of sunscreen, wear a hat, and drink plenty of water and/or electrolyte type fluids such as Gatorade and to avoid caffeine and alcohol. For those attending outdoor sporting events this weekend you are reminded to seek areas of shade as much as possible, and to utilize the outdoor cooling areas that will be setup around the venue. For those with preexisting medical conditions, local officials ask you to “consider participating in the weekend’s game by watching or listening to the game from a local business or from home”, “with the heat indexes predicted for this weekend, expected to be in the triple digits, we want our fans to be safe and that especially goes for those with health challenges”, “this is probably not the best weekend to attend the game in person if you have medical issues that could be compounded by the triple digit heat”, say local officials”.

To protect your health when temperatures and humidity are high, remember to keep cool and use common sense. The following tips are important:

- Increase fluid intake, regardless of your activity level..
- If experiencing a lot of sweating, replace salt and minerals by eating foods like bananas, or drink rehydrating beverages that contain salts and electrolytes such as sports drinks, and special rehydration fluids.
- Choose lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing and wear sunscreen.
- Wear hats that shade your face such as sun hats, visors, etc.
- Stay in the shade or air conditioned areas as much as possible.
- Work slowly if you are not used to working or exercising in heat and humidity. Stop immediately if you get dizzy, nauseated, or feel weak. Go into an air conditioned space and drink cool liquids.
- Use a buddy system. Watch others for heat-induced illness, since some people may not realize that they are suffering heat-related illnesses and can become confused or lose consciousness.

For more information about preventing heat-related illness, visit [http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat\\_guide.asp](http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.asp).