



**DALLAS COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION**

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Have a Happy, Healthy 4th of July

DCHHS Encourages West Nile Prevention and Urges Caution in High Temperatures for July 4th

July 3, 2008 (Dallas) — The 4th of July Holiday traditions call for lots of outdoor activity. Whether its backyard barbeques, outings to the lake, or watching one of the many fireworks shows, everyone needs to remain on the alert for ways to prevent two summertime threats – West Nile virus and heat-related illnesses. During the July 4th Holiday Weekend, it is important that people remember to protect themselves and their families from West Nile virus. The best way to avoid exposure to West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne illnesses is to use the three Ds - use insect repellent that contains **DEET**, picaradin or lemon oil of eucalyptus, **drain** any standing water, and **dress** in long clothing. The public can receive information on the locations of infected mosquito pools in Dallas County by sending an e-mail to westnile@dallascounty.org to be added to the *West Nile Watch* distribution list.

The National Weather Service is predicting triple digit temperatures this weekend. During summer heat waves the risk of heat-related illnesses, injuries and deaths jumps dramatically. The combination of heat and humidity in this long weekend's forecast can present dangerous conditions for everyone, especially the elderly and very young. If you notice someone suddenly experiencing sudden high temperature (but less than 104 degrees), hot and flushed skin that might be clammy to the touch, muscle or stomach cramps, nausea and/or vomiting, headache, profuse sweating, rapid pulse, or dizziness they may be suffering from heat exhaustion. Heat exhaustion is not usually a life-threatening condition. The important rules to remember regarding heat exhaustion are to get the ill person out of the sun. Replace the body's lost fluids and salt by having the person drink lots of water, Gatorade, decaffeinated iced tea, or juice. Cool the person's body with fans, cool towels, or sprays. Keep the sufferer out of the sun for the next 12–24 hours. **Seek Medical attention IMMEDIATELY if symptoms do not improve!**

DCHHS officials ask that each Dallas County resident join in an “**each one reach one**” campaign to prevent heat-related deaths this summer. Citizens are asked to check on your neighbors to see if they have a working air-conditioner unit in their home. DCHHS officials also urge the public to remember to **look before you leave** in order to avoid leaving a child in a car. **Remember to NEVER leave a child in a closed, parked**

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car. If you see a child left unattended in a parked car **call 9-1-1 immediately and stay with the car until help arrives.** During 2007, there were a total of 155 heat-related incidences reported to Dallas County; 130 cases of Heat exhaustion, 12 cases of Heat Cramps, and 13 cases of Heat Stroke. There were no deaths related to heat reported in the County last year. This mirrors the fact the last year was a cooler season with lower temperatures and fewer instances of extended periods of dangerously high heat and humidity.

“DCHHS conducts syndromic surveillance for heat-related illnesses, and to collaborate with municipalities to monitor and control West Nile virus,” said Zachary Thompson DCHHS Director. “However, we need each resident of Dallas County to join with us to prevent both West Nile virus and heat-related illnesses. Having a happy, healthy and safe July 4th is possible if we follow a few simple precautions and warnings,” Thompson continued. In addition to the precautions outlined above, DCHHS suggests the following preventive measures:

- If you do not have cooled, air-conditioning in your home, you should go to mall, library and other places with air-conditioning
- Drink plenty of fluids; avoid drinks containing alcohol, caffeine or sugar.
- Dress for the summer by wearing lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Take cool baths and showers frequently.
- Exercise during evening and early morning hours when the temperature may be lower.
- Encourage children and the elderly to stay in the shade.
- Check frequently on ill or elderly friends, relatives, neighbors who may need help.
- If you have pre-existing medical conditions, avoid strenuous and prolonged outdoor activities;
- Listen to the news for heat alerts and public health messages.
- Check with a doctor about the effects of sun and heat when taking prescription drugs, especially diuretics or antihistamines.

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