

## STRATEGIES FOR COPING IN THE EXTREMELY HOT WEATHER

### **EXTREME HEAT:**

Extreme heat is one of the most significant hazards facing Shelter Island during the summer months. Extreme heat is defined by temperatures that hover ten degrees or more above the average high temperature for the region, last for prolonged periods of time, and are accompanied by high humidity.

A heat wave's duration plays an important role in how people are affected. Heat waves are particularly dangerous for children, seniors, people with cardiovascular disease and chronic illness as well as people taking psychotropic and other medications.

### **STAYING COOL: COOLING CENTER**

When the heat index is predicted to be dangerously high, Shelter Island opens a cooling center in the air conditioned facility at its Senior Center to offer people relief from the heat. Individuals who have no access to a cool environment, especially those at risk for heat-related illness, should use the cooling center during a heat wave.

### **PROTECT YOUR HEALTH:**

- **IF POSSIBLE, STAY OUT OF THE SUN.**
- **WHEN IN THE SUN, WEAR SUNSCREEN AND A HAT TO PROTECT YOUR FACE AND HEAD.**
- **USE AN AIR CONDITIONER IF YOU HAVE ONE. SET THE THERMOSTAT TO NO LOWER THAN 78 DEGREES.**
- **IF YOU DO NOT HAVE AN AIR CONDITIONER, KEEP ROOMS WELL-VENTILATED WITH OPEN WINDOWS AND FANS.**
- **CONSIDER GOING TO A PUBLIC POOL, AIR-CONDITIONED STORE, MALL, MOVIE THEATER, OR COOLING CENTER.**
- **FANS WORK BEST AT NIGHT, WHEN THEY CAN BRING IN COOLER AIR FROM OUTSIDE.**
- **MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO CHECK ON YOUR NEIGHBORS DURING A HEAT WAVE, ESPECIALLY IF THEY ARE SENIORS, YOUNG CHILDREN AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND ACCESS AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS. MANY OLDER SENIORS LIVE ALONE COULD SUFFER UNNECESSARILY IN THE HEAT BECAUSE THEY ARE ISOLATED FROM FRIENDS AND FAMILY.**
- **SENIORS AND OTHERS WHO MAY BE SENSITIVE TO EXTREME HEAT SHOULD CONTACT FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS, OR RELATIVES AT LEAST TWICE A DAY DURING A HEAT WAVE.**
- **AVOID DRINKING BEVERAGES CONTAINING ALCOHOL, CAFFEINE, OR HIGH AMOUNTS OF SUGAR.**

## **PROTECT YOUR HEALTH:** (continued)

- WEAR LIGHTWEIGHT, LIGHT-COLORED, LOOSE CLOTHING THAT COVERS AS MUCH OF YOUR SKIN AS POSSIBLE.
- NEVER LEAVE CHILDREN, PETS, OR THOSE WHO REQUIRE SPECIAL CARE IN A PARKED CAR DURING PERIODS OF INTENSE SUMMER HEAT.
- AVOID STRENUOUS ACTIVITY, ESPECIALLY DURING THE SUN'S PEAK HOURS – 11 AM TO 4 PM. IF YOU MUST ENGAGE IN STRENUOUS ACTIVITY, DO IT DURING THE COOLEST PART OF THE DAY, USUALLY IN THE MORNING BETWEEN 4 AM AND 7 AM.
- COOL SHOWERS OR BATHS MAY BE HELPFUL, BUT AVOID EXTREME TEMPERATURE CHANGES.
- NEVER TAKE A SHOWER IMMEDIATELY AFTER BECOMING OVERHEATED – EXTREME TEMPERATURE CHANGES MAY MAKE YOU ILL, NAUSEATED, OR DIZZY.

## **KNOW THE SIGNS OF SERIOUS HEAT ILLNESS:**

**\*\*\* CALL 911 OR GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM RIGHT AWAY IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAS ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS OF HEAT ILLNESS\*\*\***

- HOT, DRY SKIN OR COLD, CLAMMY SKIN.
- CONFUSION, HALLUCINATIONS, DISORIENTATION
- UNCONSCIOUS OR UNRESPONSIVE
- NAUSEA OR VOMITING
- TROUBLE BREATHING
- RAPID, STRONG PULSE
- WEAKNESS
- DIZZINESS

**\*\*\*DON'T IGNORE THE WARNING SIGNS OF HEAT ILLNESS\*\*\***

***If you or someone you know has any of the following warning signs of heat illness, find a cool place, remove extra clothes and drink lots of water.***

- HEAVY SWEATING
- MUSCLE CRAMPS
- LIGHT HEADEDNESS, FEELING FAINT
- HEADACHE
- DECREASED ENERGY
- LOSS OF APPETITE
- NAUSEA

**HOT SUMMER WEATHER CAN INCREASE OZONE LEVELS AND CAN NEGATIVELY AFFECT YOUR HEALTH. KNOW THE SIGNS OF HIGH OZONE LEVELS:**

- CHEST PAIN
- COUGHING AND WHEEZING
- LUNG AND NASAL CONGESTION
- NAUSEA
- EYE AND NOSE IRRITATION
- FASTER BREATHING
- SORE THROAT

**\*\*When ozone levels in the unhealthy range are expected, limit vigorous outdoor physical activity during the afternoon and early evening hours when ozone levels are at their highest.**

**\*\*If you have asthma or other respiratory problems, stay in an area where it is cool and the air is filtered or air conditioned.**

**\*\*Outdoor exercise should be scheduled for the morning hours whenever possible.**

**\*\*People with heart, kidney or liver disease, or on fluid restricted diets should check with their doctors before increasing fluid intake.**

**CONSERVE WATER:**

- REPAIR LEAKY FAUCETS; TURN TAPS OFF TIGHTLY
- TAKE SHORT SHOWERS; ONLY FILL BATHTUBS HALFWAY WHEN TAKING A BATH
- RUN DISHWASHER AND WASHING MACHINES ONLY WHEN THEY ARE FULL
- DO NOT LET WATER RUN WHILE WASHING DISHES, SHAVING OR BRUSHING YOUR TEETH
- OBSERVE RESTRICTIONS ON WATERING YOUR LAWN OR PLANTS.

**CONSERVE POWER:**

While power outages occur infrequently, they are most likely to happen during the hot summer months when utility usage is at its peak. During periods of intense heat, it is important to conserve as much energy as possible to avoid brownouts and other electrical disruptions. While diminishing your power usage may seem like an inconvenience, your cooperation will help to ensure that utilities can continue to provide uninterrupted electrical service.

- Plan ahead to ensure your home and workplace are prepared for a potential outage. Have emergency supplies on hand in case of an outage. If you lose power, notify your utility provider immediately.
- Take steps to remain cool. If this is impossible in the absence of electricity, go to a cool location, such as a friend or relative's home, a theatre, a restaurant, library or a cooling center near you.

**SHELTER ISLAND SENIOR CENTER  
44 SOUTH FERRY ROAD  
SHELTER ISLAND, NY 11964  
631-749-1059**

