



**American
Red Cross**

of Greater Columbus

NEWS ADVISORY

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For Immediate Release

The Elderly and the Very Young are the Most Susceptible to Heat Illness

The American Red Cross Offers Tips on Staying Safe This Summer

June 30, 2008 - When the dog days of summer deliver hot temperatures and high humidity, the American Red Cross of Greater Columbus urges residents to take precautions against the heat.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 400 Americans die each year due to summer's sweltering heat. Everyone is at risk when temperatures rise above 90 degrees but the elderly and the very young are most susceptible to heat and heat-related illnesses. Heat-related illnesses can cause serious injury and even death if unattended. Signs of heat-related illnesses include nausea, dizziness, flushed or pale skin, heavy sweating and headaches. Victims of heat-related illness should be moved to a cool place, given cool water to drink and ice packs or cool wet cloths should be applied to the skin. If a victim refuses water, vomits or loses consciousness, call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number immediately.

Red Cross Heat Safety Tips:

- **Dress for the heat.** Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Light colors will reflect away some of the sun's energy. It is also a good idea to wear hats or to use an umbrella.
- **Drink water.** Carry water or juice with you and drink continuously even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which dehydrate the body. Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.
- **Eat small meals and eat more often.** Avoid high-protein foods, which increase metabolic heat.
- **Slow down. Avoid strenuous activity.** If you must do strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning between 4 and 7 a.m.
- **Stay indoors when possible.** If air-conditioning is not available, stay on the lowest floor out of the sunshine. Remember that electric fans do not cool, they simply circulate the air.
- **Be a good neighbor.** During heat waves, check in on elderly residents in your neighborhood and those who do not have air conditioning.
- **Learn Red Cross first aid and CPR.**

For more information on heat safety visit columbus.redcross.org.

The American Red Cross of Greater Columbus is dedicated to helping make families and communities safer at home and around the world. Sustained by over 600 volunteers, the Red Cross provides assistance to more than 500 families each year after home fires and other disasters strike. Last year the organization trained and educated more than 97,000 area residents in vital lifesaving skills like first aid, CPR and how to prepare for emergencies. The Red Cross also sent more than 800 emergency messages between members of the military and their families. The community transportation program provides rides to medical appointments for seniors and individuals with disabilities, logging more than 19,600 trips last year. All these programs and more are made possible by the donations of time and money from the greater Columbus community.

Michael Carroll is the CEO of the American Red Cross of Greater Columbus and Michael Schoedinger serves as the board chair.

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