

# HEAT WAVE SAFETY

At the YMCA, the health and wellbeing of our community is our top priority. As we anticipate extremely warm weather conditions in Vermilion County this coming week, we are taking all the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of our members, guests, and staff. To learn more about the adjustments we are making at our facilities to protect program participants from the effects of extreme heat and to find helpful tips for enjoying safe exercise, keep reading below!

## HEAT POLICY

For the safety of our staff, volunteers, members, and program participants, The Danville Family YMCA will cancel any outdoor activities if the temperature and heat index reaches 104°F or above. We will continue to closely monitor their programs and activities for children, teens, adults, older adults, and staff and to make appropriate adjustments, including moving outdoor activities to indoor spaces with fans and/or air conditioning or even cancel programs or events that, due to the above-mentioned weather issues, may threaten the health and safety of participants.

Full Heat Policy



## TIPS FOR WARM WEATHER CONDITIONS

While physical fitness is an activity that should be enjoyed all year long for the many benefits that it can bring to your body, health, and mind, being active is even more fun (and inviting) during the months in which you can get outside and work out among nature. When warm weather conditions become extreme, please remember the following:

- **Start and end slowly.** Take frequent rest and water breaks. Immediately move to a cooler area if you feel dizzy or become nauseated. Use fans to create air movement throughout your work area.
- **Stay Hydrated.** Drink water before you are thirsty. The body loses water through perspiration, and you need to replace it frequently. By the time you are thirsty, you are already dehydrated. Experts recommend that you avoid using alcoholic beverages, coffee, tea or other beverages with caffeine as a fluid replacement. These types of drinks cause you to lose even more water and salt. *The best defense is to drink plain water early and often.*
- **Wear the right gear.** Dress in light, loose-fitting clothing made of breathable fabric light in color. Choose fabrics that let moisture and heat escape. Dress in layers so you can peel off outerwear as needed as the day progresses.
- **Listen to your body.** Stop if you feel chest pain, dizzy, lightheaded, or nauseated.

## EXTREME HEAT PROTECTION

Extreme hot weather causes more fatalities than any other weather-related source. Heat waves rarely are given adequate attention but in fact, they claim more lives each year than floods, hurricanes, and tornadoes combined. Heatwaves are a silent killer. Heatstroke also affects both genders equally. However, because many men were exposed to heat in the workforce, the annual death rate is 2 times higher in men than in women.

In general, the human body cools itself by producing sweat. Sweat evaporating from the skin keeps the body cool. Higher humidity, limited air movement, and wearing protective equipment can reduce evaporation. Less evaporation means less cooling. Frequent intake of liquids is necessary to prevent dehydration through loss of sweat. Plenty of cool (50oF-60oF) water or other cool liquids should be available. Drink small amounts frequently, for example, one cup every 20 minutes.

Health and safety problems caused by excessive heat are called **heat stress**. These range from heat cramps to heat exhaustion to the most serious state, heatstroke.

- **HEAT CRAMPS** are a warning sign the body has lost too much salt through sweating. The cramps affect working muscles, such as legs,

arms, and abdomen. Heat cramps may also occur when a person is resting.

- **HEAT EXHAUSTION** is a warning that the body's heat control mechanism has become overworked. Symptoms are exhaustion, dizziness and/or nausea, pale and clammy skin, rapid pulse, and low blood pressure. Heat exhaustion may lead to heat stroke if symptoms are ignored.
- **HEAT STROKE** can be fatal. This happens when the heat loss mechanism of the body just shuts down. The person stops sweating and their body temperature goes up. The heart pounds, and the skin is hot and red. A person suffering from heatstroke needs immediate emergency medical attention.

Watch for signs of heat stress in yourself and your fellow community members. Most of the time, a person may not realize what is happening to them until heat sickness strikes. If signs of heat sickness do occur, help the victim to cool off by removing him to a cool place, fanning him/ her, or soaking him/ her with a cloth that has been dipped in cool water. Give the victim sips of water to drink **ONLY** if they are conscious.

**REMEMBER!! IF YOU SUSPECT HEATSTROKE DUE TO BRIGHT RED, HOT SKIN, AND NO SWEAT, CALL FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL HELP.**

Thanks for exercising responsibly and keeping our Y community safe!