



For Immediate Release:

August 1, 2011

HEAT ALERT:

High temperatures forecasted for the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys Today and Tomorrow; Air Quality Advisory declared for sensitive individuals in the Santa Clarita Valley

LOS ANGELES – Triple-digit temperatures are forecasted for the San Fernando Valley, with high temperatures also forecasted for the Santa Clarita Valley today and tomorrow. According to the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD), air quality is unhealthy for sensitive individuals in the Santa Clarita Valley for today and most likely tomorrow. The Los Angeles County Health Officer would like to remind everyone that precautions should be taken, especially by those people sensitive to the heat.

“While people don’t need to be told it’s hot outside, they do need to be reminded to take care of themselves, children, the elderly, and pets when the weather gets hotter,” said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer. “When temperatures are high, prolonged sun exposure may cause dehydration, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. Never leave children, elderly people, or pets unattended in vehicles, even with the windows ‘cracked or opened,’ because temperatures inside can quickly rise to life-threatening levels. It is illegal, according to California law, to leave children alone in a car.”

For a list of cooling centers and additional information on heat-related illnesses and prevention, please visit the Public Health website at <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>, or call the LA County Information line at 2-1-1 from any landline or cell phone within the county.

Heat may worsen the affects of poor air quality in areas of heavy smog. People living or working in the Santa Clarita Valley with heart disease, asthma or other respiratory disease to minimize outdoor activities. Schools that have children with sensitive conditions, including heart disease, asthma, other chronic respiratory diseases, should not participate in PE or outdoor physical activity and should stay indoors as much as possible.

If you plan to be outdoors, take precautions to protect yourself from the heat. Symptoms of dehydration and heat cramps include dizziness, fatigue, faintness, headaches, muscle cramps, and increased thirst. Individuals with these symptoms should be moved to a cooler, shaded place and given water or sport drinks. More severe symptoms such as diminished judgment, disorientation, pale and clammy skin, a rapid and weak pulse, and/or fast and shallow breathing may indicate heat exhaustion or impending heat stroke and requires immediate medical attention.

Several tips for beating the heat include:

- Wear light, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing.



- Drink water or electrolyte-replacing sports drinks often (do not wait until you are thirsty), and avoid drinking sweetened drinks, caffeine, and alcohol.
- Offer help to those in your neighborhood with limited access to air conditioning and transportation, such as seniors or those who are ill. Check on them frequently or take them to a location with air conditioning.
- During peak heat hours stay in an air-conditioned area. If you don't have access to air conditioning in your home, visit public facilities such as shopping malls, parks, and libraries to stay cool.
- Avoid unnecessary exertion, such as vigorous exercise during peak sun hours, if you are outside or in a non-air conditioned building.
- Stay out of the sun if you do not need to be in it. When in the sun, wear a hat, preferably with a wide brim, and loose-fitting, light-colored clothing with long sleeves and pants to protect yourself from sun damage. And remember sun screen and sun glasses.

Heat-Related Illnesses

Heat Cramps:

- Symptoms include muscular pains and spasms, usually in the stomach, arms or leg muscles.
- Usually results from heavy exertion, such as exercise, during extreme heat.
- Although heat cramps are the least severe of all heat-related problems, they are usually the first signal that the body is having trouble coping with hot temperatures. Heat cramps should be treated immediately with rest, fluids and getting out of the heat.
- Seek medical attention if pain is severe or nausea occurs.

Heat Exhaustion:

- Symptoms include heavy sweating, pale and clammy moist skin, extreme weakness or fatigue, muscle cramps, headache, dizziness or confusion, nausea or vomiting, fast and shallow breathing, or fainting.
- First Aid: Heat exhaustion should be treated immediately with rest in a cool area, sipping water or a sports drink, applying cool and wet cloths and elevating the feet 12 inches.
- If left untreated, victims may go into heat stroke.
- Seek medical attention if the person does not respond to the above, basic treatment.

Heat Stroke:

- Symptoms include flushed, hot and dry skin (no sweating), high body temperature (above 103F), confusion or dizziness, unconsciousness, throbbing headache, rapid, or strong pulse.
- Heat stroke is the most severe heat-related illness and occurs when a person's temperature control system, which produces sweat, stops working. Heat stroke may lead to brain damage and death.
- First Aid: Call 911. Move victim to a cool shaded area. Fan the body, spray body with water.



The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises nearly 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>, visit our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth>, find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/lapublichealth>, or follow us on Twitter: LAPublicHealth.

###