



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC
HEALTH

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CALIFORNIA'S PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR OFFERS TIPS ON PREPARING FOR HOT SUMMER

SACRAMENTO –With summer starting next week, Dr. Mark Horton, director of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), spoke with downtown visitors and workers offering his “Top-10 *Hot Tips*” (attached) to prepare for upcoming sunny, triple-digit weather. Horton explained people should use precautions during hot, sunny days to avoid ultraviolet (UV) damage to the skin, heat-related illnesses, youth drowning and near drowning, and risk of West Nile disease.

"Californians enjoy some of the sunniest weather in the nation," said Horton, "but we should be aware of sun and heat exposure risks and be prepared. When temperatures rise quickly – particularly in regions that don't typically have extreme heat – there are numerous health issues that can arise.

"The best way to stay safe during the summer is to be aware of potential harmful situations, and take steps to protect oneself and one's family."

One of the most prevalent and harmful sun exposure risks is skin cancer due to UV radiation. Skin cancer is by far the most common cancer in California. There will be approximately 129,000 new cases of skin cancer this year – more than the total number of prostate, breast, lung, and colon cancer cases combined. One-in-

five Californians is expected to get skin cancer. The good news is that skin cancer can be prevented by practicing a few simple safety measures, such as sporting a wide-brimmed hat, applying sunscreen, wearing sunglasses and covering up with loose-fitting clothing.

Excessive summer heat also brings the threat of heat-related illnesses, from mild heat cramps to potentially life-threatening heat stroke. In July of 2006, California suffered a severe heat wave lasting two weeks. According to epidemiologists at CDPH, heat-related illness during this heat wave caused 655 deaths and 16,166 hospitalization admissions. To avoid these outcomes, reduce sun exposure from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For those who work outside, drink plenty of water or juice even if not thirsty, and take rest breaks in the shade. Never leave anyone, including pets, in a car, as it can take as few as 10 minutes for the temperature to rise to levels that can kill.

Drowning is the leading cause of injury deaths for children under six years of age. There are approximately 65 deaths in California each year of children under six. Near-drowning can cause lifelong disability. The California Department of Developmental Services serves approximately 660 Californians who have survived near-drowning accidents, most of whom are severely disabled with irreversible brain damage caused by being underwater for as little as two minutes. Parents need to supervise children at all times and ensure that a pool or spa is surrounded with a safety barrier.

California is a favorite destination spot for many, but it also attracts unwelcome visitors – mosquitoes, some carrying West Nile Virus (WNV). WNV often mimics the flu, with fevers and body aches. WNV can cause many health complications, including rare fatalities. Mosquitoes bite in the early morning and evening so it is best to wear insect repellent during those times.

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The California Department of Public Health thanks the following organizations for providing products at this event to help keep Californians safe this summer: Safeway, Sacramento and Yolo Mosquito Vector Control District, National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service, and the California Cancer Registry

Follow Dr. Horton on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/CAPublicHealth>

Top-10 *Hot* Tips to Stay Safe This Summer

1. Reduce exposure to the sun from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. when UV rays are strongest, and keep physical activities to a minimum during that time. When working outside, drink plenty of water or juice even if you are not thirsty, and take rest breaks in the shade.
2. Wear a wide-brimmed hat to cover the face and neck, and wear loose-fitting clothing to keep cool and to protect your skin from the sun and mosquitoes.
3. Wear sunglasses that provide 100 percent **UVA and UVB** protection. Chronic exposure to ***the sun*** can cause cataracts, which left untreated, can lead to blindness.
4. Liberally apply sunscreen (at least SPF 15) 15 minutes before venturing outdoors and re-apply at least every two hours – sunscreen prevents skin cancer, the No. 1 cancer affecting Californians and prevents premature aging.
5. Never, EVER leave infants, children or frail elderly unattended in a parked car – it can take as little as 10 minutes for the temperature inside a car to rise to levels that can kill.
6. To prevent overheating, use cool compresses, misting, showers and baths – if you or someone experiences a rapid, strong pulse, feels delirious, becomes unconscious or has a body temperature above 102, call 911 immediately.
7. Prevent children from drowning by combining adult supervision at all times and have a safety barrier that surrounds a pool or spa. Drowning is the leading cause of injury deaths for children under five.
8. Make sure that your doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. Some mosquitoes carry West Nile Virus (WNV) which often mimics influenza, with fevers, body aches and

eye pain. WNV can cause serious health complications, and in rare cases, death.

9. Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaradin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535 according to label instructions. Mosquitoes usually bite in the early morning and evening so it is important to wear repellent during those times.
10. Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property, including flower pots, old car tires, rain gutters and pet bowls – mosquitoes breed and lay eggs in standing water.

For more information and tips, visit: <http://cdph.ca.gov>
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