



## Delaware County Public Health

709 West Main St., P.O. Box 359  
Manchester, IA 52057  
563 927-7551 Fax 563 927-7577  
[www.regmedctr.org](http://www.regmedctr.org)



## Excessive Heat can Lead to Serious Health Complications

Delaware County Public Health reminds you to take precautions during summers rising temperatures and high heat indexes. All Iowans should take precautions to avoid health problems associated with summer heat. Health complications include heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and dehydration.

“Try to limit outdoor activities in the heat of the day, primarily between 10:00AM – 2:00PM,” said Delma Hardin, Delaware County Public Health. “If you must be outside during this time, take breaks and drink plenty of fluids. Parents need to make sure their children are well hydrated.”

Heat exhaustion occurs when sweating, the body’s cooling system, fails to eliminate heat fast enough. The first signs of heat exhaustion are faintness, rapid pulse, flushing or reddening of the skin, and may be accompanied by stomachache or headache. When symptoms occur, stop all activity and drink liquids such as water or re-hydrating beverages (Gatorade, Powerade, or Pedialyte). Avoid alcoholic and caffeinated drinks.

Heat stroke, a more serious and potentially deadly situation, is often associated with confusion and a lack of sweating. If you suspect someone has heat stroke, seek medical help immediately. While waiting for help, move the person out of direct sun and try to cool them off.

Dehydration occurs when a person loses fluid and sodium by sweating, and it is not replaced quickly enough. A person should continually drink fluids, and not wait until they are thirsty, as thirst is a sign of dehydration. During extreme heat situations, a person should drink two to four glasses of water an hour.

Heat complications can affect any person at any age. Hardin suggests checking daily on older neighbors, or those with chronic health conditions, especially if they do not have air conditioning. Also, as a reminder, never leave children, elderly, or pets in a parked car, even if the windows are partially open, as this may not protect those inside from rapidly rising temperatures.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Delaware County Public Health at 563-927-7551.

For additional information, please visit:

Iowa Department of Public Health [www.idph.state.ia.us](http://www.idph.state.ia.us)

Mayo Clinic [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)

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