



News Release



Shelby County Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEALTH OFFICIALS REPORT FIRST PROBABLE HEAT-RELATED DEATH

MEMPHIS – The first probable heat-related death has been reported, and Shelby County Health Department (SCHD) officials want to continue urging residents to stay cool and hydrated during these hot summer days.

Extreme heat can lead to very high body temperatures, brain and organ damage and even death. People suffer heat-related illnesses when their bodies are unable to compensate and cool themselves properly.

Between 2010 and 2014, more than 40 Shelby County residents died from heat-related illness.

When temperatures climb above 90 degrees Fahrenheit, older adults need to take precautions by spending as much time as possible inside with the air conditioning, such as a shopping mall, library, senior center or movie theatre. Fans cannot provide enough cooling if the temperature is 90 degrees or above.

“Many heat-related deaths are preventable,” said Helen Morrow, M.D., health officer for the SCHD. “We want to remind everyone to check on elderly family members and neighbors throughout the day, especially those with other health conditions. “It is important to stay hydrated and avoid prolonged periods in the sun, specifically those who work outdoors or in buildings without adequate air conditioning.”

Symptoms of heat exhaustion include:

- Fatigue
- Weakness/Fainting
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Headache
- Myalgia
- Dizziness
- Muscle Cramps
- Irritability

If an individual demonstrates any symptoms of exhaustion, they should immediately cool down by going indoors to a well-ventilated and air-conditioned building, drink plenty of cool water and rest. If symptoms persist for more than 48 hours, they are encouraged to contact their primary care physician.

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