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Health Advisory: Help Prevent Heat-Related Illness and Death Among People Most At Risk of Heat-Related Health Impacts

- Identify people at increased risk for heat-related illness (see checklist).
- Remind patients that all hot weather, particularly heat waves, can be dangerous and instruct them to use air conditioning.
- Refer patients without air conditioning to NJ 2-1-1 for information regarding Cooling Centers: www.nj211.org/nj-cooling-centers
- Please be aware that emergency activations and resources opened in response to extreme heat or storm events change as quickly as the weather. In addition to the link above, you can also refer to your county's Office of Emergency Management web page.
- Encourage people to pay attention to official announcements about places where they can go to get relief from the heat.
- Instruct people and their caregivers to stay cool and well-hydrated.

People experiencing homelessness can dial 2-1-1 or 877-652-1148 (if you are using a rotary dial phone, please dial 1-877-746-5211)

Identifying People at Risk for Heat-Related Illness and Death

People who do not have or use air conditioning **and have one or more of these risk factors:**

- Chronic health conditions including:
 - Cardiovascular, respiratory or renal disease
 - Obesity (BMI > 30)
 - Diabetes
 - Serious mental illness such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder
 - Cognitive or developmental disorder that impairs judgment or self-care, such as dementia
- Have difficulty thermoregulating or use medications that can impair thermoregulation, including:
 - Diuretics
 - Anticholinergics
 - Antipsychotics
- Substance use disorder or excessive alcohol consumption
- Socially isolated or with limited mobility

Additional guidance for people at greatest risk to heat-related illness or death

- Remind people that heat events (heatwaves) are not just uncomfortable but can be dangerous.
- Encourage them to monitor weather alerts and make sure they have a plan for cooling relief during extreme heat.
- Encourage people to use their air conditioners. Suggest setting air conditioners to 78 degrees or “low” cool to provide comfort, save on electricity costs, and conserve energy.
- Let people know that NJ will share a list of available cooling spaces prior to and during a heatwave. Also, people can call 2-1-1 or go to www.nj211.org/nj-cooling-centers to find a cooling center in New Jersey.
- Advise people to increase fluid intake during hot weather.
- Recommend self-monitoring of hydration, such as body weight measurement, for people who have health conditions sensitive to fluid balance or use medications that can impair thermoregulation or cause dehydration.
- Engage caregivers and other support networks to frequently call or otherwise remotely check on heat-vulnerable people to help them stay cool and well-hydrated before and during hot weather. Remind them that all hot weather – including but not limited to heatwaves – can be dangerous and help them develop a plan to stay cool.
- Discuss with people and their caregivers about the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness or risk of exacerbating chronic medical conditions associated with excessive heat and provide guidance about when to call 911 or go to the emergency department.