



Louisiana Health Alert Message 23-14: Extreme Heat Poses Serious Risk of Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke

Origination Date:
August 2, 2023

Revision Dates (List All Revision Dates):

Louisiana Health Alert Message 23-14: Extreme Heat Poses Serious Risk of Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke

Dangerously hot conditions with heat index values - or 'feels like temperatures' - up to 115° are forecasted throughout Louisiana through August 6th. Evening lows will remain in the 80's which provides little cooling relief.

These extremely hot temperatures and high humidity can easily lead to hyperthermia or life-threatening heat stroke if proper precautions are not taken.

People at greatest risk of heat-related illness have one or more of the following factors:

- Chronic health conditions (cardiovascular, renal disease, obesity, respiratory illness, diabetes).
- Mental health conditions including but not limited to depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia.
- Dementia, cognitive difficulty, difficulty with self-care, or difficulty thermoregulating.
- Use of diuretics, anticholinergics, psychotropics, or [medications affecting thermoregulation](#).
- Substance use disorder or excessive alcohol consumption.
- Socially isolated or with limited mobility.
- Outdoor workers (e.g., construction, agriculture, landscaping, transportation, sanitation, utilities). OSHA issued a [heat hazard alert](#) to remind employers of their obligation to protect workers from heat illness.
- Unhoused individuals and those with limited or no AC.

Guidance for providers

- Review [medications that may impact thermoregulation](#) with patients.
- Discuss [signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke](#) and risk of exacerbating chronic health conditions.
- Advise increased fluid intake when medically appropriate.
- [Stress precautions for patients who work outdoors](#).

Guidance for patients

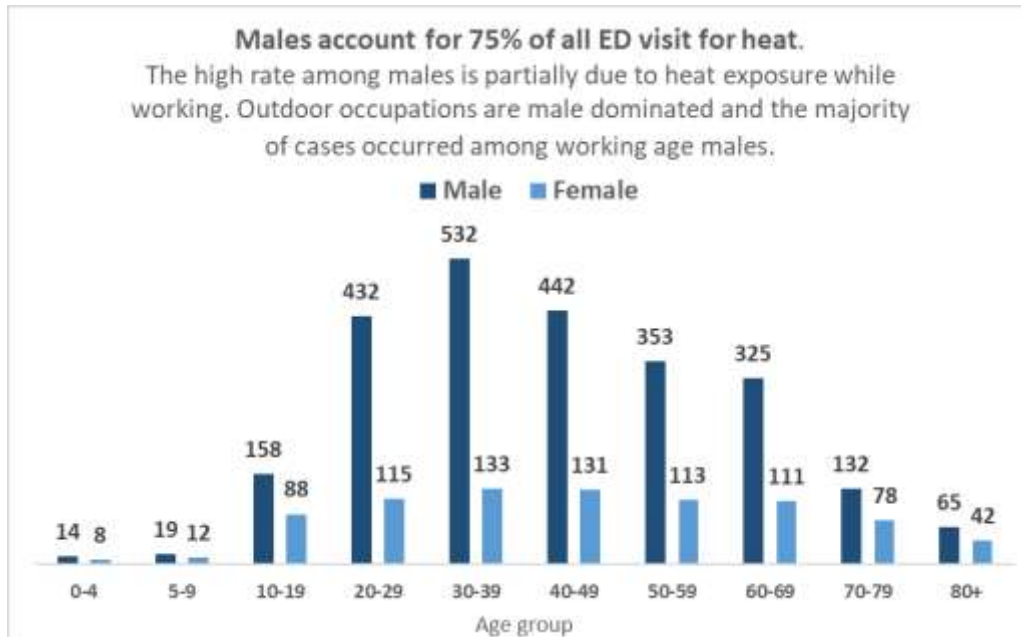
- AC is the best protection, even for a couple of hours. Fans do not provide sufficient cooling. Encourage people who do not have AC to visit others with AC or a library, shopping mall, Walmart, or cooling center. To find a cooling center in Orleans Parish call 311 or go to

<https://ready.nola.gov/home/>. For other areas of the state, news outlets are the best sources.

- Limit outdoor activities to early morning or evening and out of direct sunlight.
- Call or check on family and friends/neighbors about staying cool. This is especially important for the elderly and people with limited mobility.

Public health surveillance

The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) is tracking ED visits for heat illnesses. There have been approximately 3,300 ED visits due to heat since April.



ED, hospitalization, and death records are critical in identifying vulnerable populations, allocating resources, and targeting prevention strategies.

LDH requests clinicians to screen for and include heat exposure information and diagnostic codes in the medical record:

- Diagnostic and External Cause of Injury codes for Effects of Heat and Light, 10th Revision.
https://ldh.la.gov/assets/docs/lah/Heat-Related_Illness_ICD_Diagnostic_Codes.pdf
- External cause of morbidity: work-relatedness, 10th Revision
https://ldh.la.gov/assets/docs/lah/External_Cause_of_Morbidity_Work-Related_ICD_Codes.pdf

Resources:

- LDH provides tailored training to Louisiana health care workers on the identification, treatment, and prevention of heat-related health conditions. CMEs\CEUs are available. To schedule a training, contact Dr. Alicia VanDoren at avando@lsuhsc.edu.
- [Treatment and Prevention of Heat-Related Illness](#). New England Journal of Medicine 2022.
- [Wilderness Medical Society Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Prevention and Treatment of Heat Illness: 2019 Update](#). Wilderness & Environmental Medicine 2019.

