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BEAT THE HEAT: LIST OF DU PAGE COOLING CENTERS AVAILABLE ONLINE

WHEATON — With heat indices expected to be above 90 degrees for the next several days, DuPage County wants to remind residents that a list of cooling centers throughout the area is available on the County's website (www.dupageco.org).

Cooling centers provide those who may have neither air conditioning, nor someone to care for them, with a place to get some relief. During times of excessive heat it is important to recognize that the elderly are not the only ones susceptible to the excessive heat. Those who are going to be outdoors this week should also take the necessary steps to ensure they are well-hydrated and dressed appropriately.

Residents should also check in on their neighbors, especially senior citizens, who may need assistance in protecting themselves from the dangers that come with these high temperatures.

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, the best way to avoid heat related problems is to:

Use a buddy system. If you are working in the heat, check on coworkers and have someone else do the same for you. If you are at home and are 65 years of age or older or have a chronic health problem, ask a friend, relative or neighbor check on you at least twice a day, even if you have air conditioning. If you know someone who is 65 years of age or older or who has a chronic health problem, check on them at least twice a day.

Limit outdoor activities. Try to plan activities for the coolest times of the day — before noon and in the evening. When physically active, rest frequently in the shade.

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Drink plenty of fluids. During hot weather, you will need to drink more liquid than your thirst indicates. Even if you remain indoors and limit your activity, your body still needs to replace lost fluids, salt and minerals. Make an extra effort to drink a minimum of six to eight 8 oz. glasses of cool fluids daily. During heavy exercise in a hot environment, drink two to four glasses of cool fluids each hour. Parents should be sure young children get sufficient fluids. If you are on a fluid-restricted diet, or if you take diuretics, ask your physician about fluid intake during hot weather.

Protect your body. Wear as little clothing as possible when indoors, and wear light colored, loose fitting clothing outdoors. When spending time outdoors, avoid direct sunlight, wear a hat and use a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) greater than 15 to protect yourself against sunburn.

Never leave children, the elderly or pets in a parked car, not even for just a few minutes. The air temperature inside a car rises rapidly during hot weather and can lead to brain damage or death.

Take care of your pets. In many ways, dogs and cats react to hot weather as humans do. Offer pets extra water and be sure to place the water dish in a shaded area if outdoors. Make sure pets have a protected place where they can get away from the sun.

To find a cooling center in your area, please visit www.dupageco.org, or call 630-407-6500.

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