



## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Health Department  
Town Center Building - 12 Mudge Way  
Bedford, MA 01730-2144  
Phone: 781-275-6507  
Fax: 781-687-6157

## Board of Health

Beatrice Brunkhorst, Chair  
Susan Schwartz, Vice Chair  
Ann Kiessling  
Anita Raj  
Maureen Richichi

Heidi Porter, MPH, REHS/RS, Health and Human Services Director

Jackie Barmashi, BSN, RN, Public Health Nurse

### **Unhealthy Heat Alert for June 22<sup>nd</sup> to June 24<sup>th</sup> – How to Prepare – Cooling Centers Open**

As of June 20<sup>th</sup>, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) has issued an [Unhealthy Heat Alert](#) for **Sunday June 22<sup>nd</sup> to Tuesday June 24<sup>th</sup>**. Temperatures are projected to be upwards of 85-98°F. Unhealthy heat is defined as a period of 85°F or above for three or more consecutive days. In Massachusetts, hot temperature is often accompanied by high humidity. Hot temperatures and high humidity can cause heat illness if you are not careful. Please be mindful of ways to prevent heat related illness and stay safe. In light of this weather, some tips on how to stay safe are included below.

#### **The First is the Worst:**

Data show that the first heat wave is often the worst for people's health, leading to more heat-related illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths. This is because our bodies need time to adjust to the heat, making it very important to prepare early, *before* the day of unhealthy heat, in order to stay healthy and safe.

#### **Drink Plenty of Fluids:**

During hot weather you will need to increase your fluid intake, regardless of your activity level. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink – thirst is the first sign of dehydration. (Note: If your doctor generally limits the amount of fluid you drink or has you on water pills, ask how much you should drink while the weather is hot.) Popsicles, watermelon, cucumber, lettuce, and celery all contain water and summertime is the perfect time to indulge in such treats. Avoid caffeine and alcohol whenever possible and bring plenty of water to outdoor activities!

If you're sweating, you're losing both the salt and water your body needs. Electrolyte drinks like Gatorade, and electrolyte powder (to add to your water), like Liquid I.V., can replenish the electrolytes your body loses when sweating. (Note: if you have electrolyte abnormalities, check with your doctor before drinking electrolyte drinks.)

#### **Wear Appropriate Clothing and Sunscreen to Prevent Sunburn:**

Choose lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. Use broad spectrum sunscreens with a SPF (Sun Protection Factor) value of 30 or higher regularly to protect against the sun's rays. Apply sunscreen to all exposed skin at least 30-60 minutes before going out into the sun. Reapply at least every two hours or more often if you are swimming or sweating. [Infants 6 months and under should be kept out of direct sunlight](#). If sun exposure is unavoidable, consult with a health care professional before applying sunscreen to infants younger than 6 months.

#### **Stay Cool Indoors:**

Stay indoors and, if at all possible, stay in an air-conditioned area. Even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat. If your home does not have air conditioning, consider other locations that may have air conditioning such as:

**The Bedford Public Library** – 7 Mudge Way, Bedford 01730

- Monday –Thursday: 9am to 9pm, Friday: 9am to 6pm, Saturday: 9am to 5pm, Sunday: closed

**The Bedford Council on Aging** – 12 Mudge Way, Bedford 01730

- Monday – Friday: 8am to 4pm, Saturday: 10am to 3pm, Sunday: closed

**The Burlington Mall** – 75 Middlesex Turnpike, Burlington 01803

- Monday – Thursday: 10am to 8pm; Friday – Saturday: 10am to 9pm; Sunday: 11am to 6pm

In addition to the locations listed above, the Town of Bedford is opening up the Police Station Training Room at 2 Mudge Way as a Cooling Center on Monday 6/23, and Tuesday, 6/24, 10 am – 6 pm and the Flint Room in Town Center, 12 Mudge Way on Wednesday 6/25, 12:30 – 6 pm. If you do not have air conditioning, you are welcome to visit the Cooling Center for respite. Additionally, pets controlled on leashes or in carriers/cages are welcome during operational hours of the Cooling Center.

**Monitor Those at High Risk for Heat-Related Illness:**

Although any one at any time can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others.

- Those 65 years of age or older, or those with pre-existing medical conditions, may not compensate for heat stress efficiently and are less likely to sense and response to change in temperature.
- Infants and children up to five years of age are sensitive to the effects of high temperatures and rely on others to regulate their environments and provide adequate liquids.
- People who work outside.

**Heat Illnesses:**

- **Heat Cramps** are muscular pains and spasms that cause heavy sweating and occur after vigorous activities like running or playing tennis. Their signs are painful abdominal spasms and cramps in major muscles such as the legs and abdomen. Cramps subside with rest, cooling down and plenty of water.
- **Heat Exhaustion** usually occurs when people work themselves too hard in a warm and humid place. The person's body loses too much water and salt, usually through sweating. This affects the person's blood flow and nutrient transport to important organs and muscles.
- **Heat Stroke** is a life-threatening heat emergency. Heat stroke occurs when the person's body can no longer control its temperature so the body's temperature rises very quickly and is unable to cool itself down. Body temperature can reach dangerously high levels in 10-15 minutes, so prompt intervention is very important.

Heat Exhaustion	Heat Stroke
<b>ACT FAST</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Move to a cooler area</li><li>• Loosen clothing</li><li>• Sip cool water</li><li>• Seek medical help if symptoms don't improve</li></ul>	<b>ACT FAST</b> <b>CALL 911</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Move person to a cooler area</li><li>• Loosen clothing and remove extra layers</li><li>• Cool with water or ice</li></ul>
<i>Dizziness</i> <i>Thirst</i> <i>Heavy Sweating</i> <i>Nausea</i> <i>Weakness</i>	<i>Confusion</i> <i>Dizziness</i> <i>Becomes Unconscious</i>
<i>Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.</i>	<i>Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not given.</i>

Stay Cool, Stay Hydrated, Stay Informed!

Logos: NIOSH, CDC, NIOSH, NHTSA

**Bedford Springs Brooks Park (SBP) Reminder:**

SBP is a great way to enjoy the summer heat with family and friends! SBP offers a bathing beach, spray park, playground, shade structures, picnic areas, and games! The Park is **open currently through August 10<sup>th</sup>** and hours of operation are **Wed – Thurs 10:00pm – 5:00pm, Fri 10am – 7pm, Sat and Sun 10am – 5pm** (closed Monday and Tuesday). For current membership information and pricing [click here to visit the Bedford Recreation Department's page!](#)

**Additional Tips to Prevent Heat Illness:**

- Avoid direct sun exposure from 10am-2pm, when the sun is the strongest.
- Limit vigorous exercise or chores to early morning or late afternoon.
- Slow down and avoid strenuous activity.
- Dress in light colored, loose-fitting clothes.
- Drink plenty of water, non-caffeinated fluid, non-alcoholic beverages.
- Eat well-balanced, light, regular meals.
- When possible, stay indoors and in air conditioning.
- Do not leave pets outside for extended periods of time.
- **Never** leave children or pets alone in a closed vehicle. Even with the windows cracked open, interior temperatures can rise almost 20°F within 10 minutes.
- Remember to check on your neighbors and those who may have difficulty preparing for extreme heat.
- Make daily visits to older relatives or neighbors. Remind them to stay hydrated and offer to help with transportation to cooler air-conditioned locations.

For additional information, please contact the Bedford Health Department at 781-275-6507 or visit <https://www.bedfordma.gov/197/Health-Department>. You may also visit the Massachusetts Unhealthy Heat Forecast at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-unhealthy-heat-forecast>.