



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Two more Alabamians succumb to heat

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The number of heat-related deaths in Alabama reported since Aug. 1 has risen to 10 as of Aug. 20, according to the Alabama Department of Public Health. Alabama hospital data indicate that the heat was the principal cause of 58 hospital admissions and was the reason an additional 193 persons came to hospital emergency rooms for treatment but were not admitted.

A review of the hospital data shows the largest age group for hospital admissions was 25 through 44 years of age with 101 persons affected. This was followed by the 45- through 59-year-old age group with 60 persons seen. Persons over 60 had 49 encounters, closely followed by those in the 15- through 24-year-old age group at 41. Only 10 cases were reported in children age 1 through 14.

Males were overwhelming represented in the number of heat-related admissions and deaths in the state, with 202 males compared to just 59 females who experienced heat-related illnesses.

During periods of extreme heat such as this, Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, cautions the public to be alert to heat-related illnesses and act to keep cool. "Take frequent breaks in an air-conditioned area during the hottest period of the day. Drink more fluids, but avoid beverages containing alcohol or caffeine."

Heat-related deaths have been reported in these Alabama counties: Autauga, Chilton, Coffee, Elmore, Henry, Montgomery and Morgan.

Other preventive measures include the following:

- People age 65 and older should take special care because they are particularly susceptible to heat-related illness and complications
- People taking certain drugs, tranquilizers and diuretics have an increased risk of heat-related illness
- Do not over-exert yourself during the heat of the day
- Take cool showers or baths
- Reduce or eliminate strenuous activities
- Never leave humans or pets in parked vehicles

To help keep the public updated about heat-related illnesses reported, the Alabama Department of Public Health Web site, www.adph.org, now includes a link on its front page. A state map provides the number of cumulative heat-related illnesses and deaths by county and other information by status, age group and sex is available.

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